

# Congresbury Village Cross, Broad Street, Congresbury, Somerset Archaeological Excavation

**YCCART 2016/Y6**

Scheduled Monument 28824  
North Somerset HER 377

HE Ref: S00141731  
NGR ST4373463815

August 2016 Client: Congresbury Parish Council



*Congresbury village cross c 1890 (courtesy of Congresbury Local History Society)*

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## **1 Abstract**

*Evaluation excavation was carried out by YCCCART for Congresbury Parish Council in August 2016 at Congresbury cross. Despite severe damage by a recent BT pipe trench to the area immediately adjacent to the cross, it was revealed to have significant basement structures, engineered in the 14<sup>th</sup> century to provide a stable base for the cross. This adds to our currently sketchy knowledge of how crosses were constructed. This basement and the lower part of the first step, probably not previously seen in their entirety for 200 years, are most likely responsible for the baseless local story of there being two further steps under the adjacent roads.*

*Limited details of possible pre-cross structures were recorded, although no dating evidence was uncovered in the tiny area available. The sequence of road construction next to the cross was recorded. Overall very few finds were made, mostly local and post-1620 in date.*

## **2 Acknowledgements**

- 2.1 Thanks are due to Congresbury Parish Council, who own the cross and encouraged the excavation; to North Somerset Highways Department, who facilitated closing the road for the duration; to Skanska UK PLC, for removing road surfaces and replacing after the excavation and fencing the site free of charge; to Dan Smith at the North Somerset Development Management Team for providing practical help and monitoring; to Mel Barge at Historic England for walking a rusty applicant through his Scheduled Monument Consent procedure; and to the good folk of the Yatton Congresbury Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team, for site and post-excavation work. Thanks are also due to the people of Congresbury, who took a keen interest in our work, and who from time to time created blockages on the adjacent pavements while reading our information displays.

### 3 Introduction

- 3.1 This investigation forms an initial phase of what is hoped will be an archaeological non-intervention recording programme and long-term monitoring programme for the cross.
- 3.2 Congresbury village cross (hereafter 'the cross', and not to be confused with the cross in Congresbury churchyard, also a Scheduled Monument, but not referred to further in this document) ([http://www.yccart.co.uk/index\\_htm\\_files/The%20Old%20Stone%20Crosses%20of%20Congresbury%20final.pdf](http://www.yccart.co.uk/index_htm_files/The%20Old%20Stone%20Crosses%20of%20Congresbury%20final.pdf)) was constructed before 1390, almost certainly to act as a market focus for the Congresbury Market and Fair (Broomhead, *in prep*). There seems to be no specific charter for the fair, but documents from 1227 (*Calendar of Charter Rolls* 17 February 1227) imply its existence. The market survived long enough to be photographed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is possible that the very irregular wear patterns seen on the stonework of the steps of the cross are partly a result of this use.
- 3.3 Initially the owners of this cross were its commissioners, the bishopric of Bath and Wells. At the Reformation, the manor passed into the hands of Edward Seymour, the Duke of Somerset, and from him through the Owen and Carr families, who passed it by will to found Queen Elizabeth's Hospital in Bristol in 1586. This body's successors handed the ownership of the cross to Congresbury Parish Council in 1975, and it is now a formally registered asset of the Council (Cran 1983: 40; J Dixon, *pers comm*).
- 3.4 The cross is in a vulnerable setting, lying as it does immediately next to the link road from A370 to A38 (Congresbury to Churchill), with a heavy and seemingly increasing traffic load. The vulnerability of such structures to traffic can be seen locally from the examples of the partial demolition of the Market Cross at Cheddar, twice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, by small vehicles (private cars) (Fig 1). Vehicles on this road in Congresbury regularly drive over the lowest step or hit the structure of the cross (both personally witnessed and photographed July 2016).



*Fig 1: Cheddar market cross semi demolished by a private car for the second time in 12 years (2012)*



Fig 2: Left: BMW hits Congresbury cross, July 2016 Right: Scuff mark from above (among earlier collision marks). Note the damaged nature of the edge of all the roadside stones (not seen on other sides of the cross)

3.5 Such problems with traffic threatening the structures of village crosses are not new, nor are measures to protect them – in 1767/8, the churchwardens of Cheddar paid one shilling (5p) to erect '*glansing stones against the Pillars of the Cross*' (SHC Cheddar Churchwardens accounts DD\SAS/C795/SE/14 and retained in Cheddar church)

3.6 Such damage to a parish-owned and Scheduled asset has focussed the community mind on the vulnerability of Congresbury cross, and in discussions in early 2016 between parish council, district council and Historic England, initial thoughts were put forward as to how some degree of protection for the structure might be achieved.

3.7 Since this structure has all the statutory status outlined above, protective engineering will require consents (especially Scheduled Monument Consent) for such works. Let it be clear that none of the below should affect the status of the *setting* of the cross.

3.8 The Scheduling Document (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1015505>) for the cross includes this phrase:

*'The cross is reputed to have two further calvary steps which were buried when the level of the road was raised some time before the mid 19th century. The remains of the buried calvary steps are included in the scheduling. The tarmac and make up of the road around the cross is excluded from the scheduling where this falls within its protective margin, but the ground beneath is included.'*

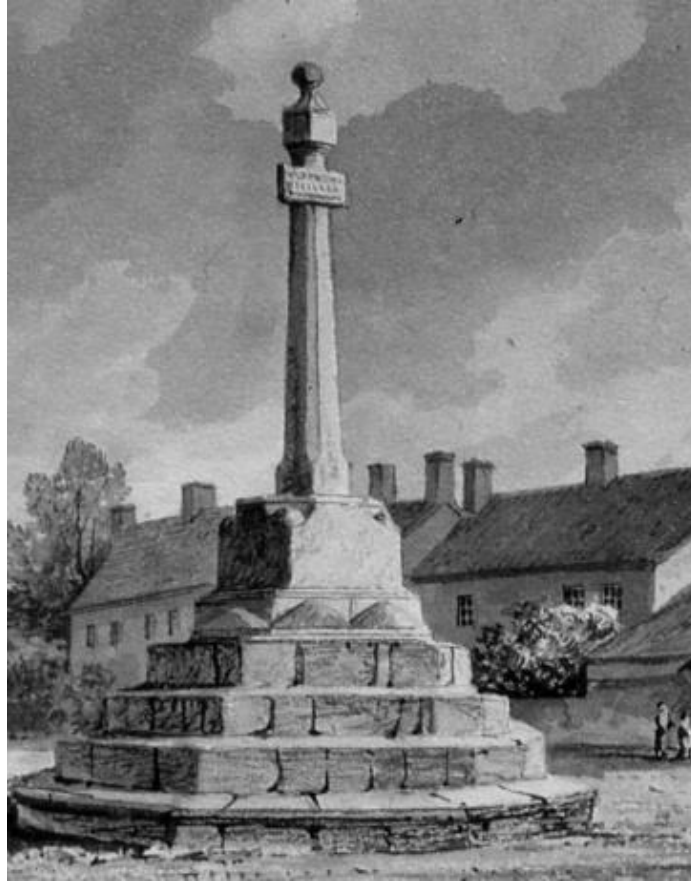
3.9 The Listing document also accepts the existence of these steps

*'..Village Cross. C15 with C19 shaft finial. Limestone. Octagonal on plan with 4 tiers of steps (formerly 6 - two are buried by the raising of the road level) up to square socket which has broached shoulders...'*

3.10 The earliest written record of these proposed further two steps seems to be in Pooley's 'Old Stone Crosses of Somerset' (1877: 125), but the story is remarkably resilient and is still known today.

3.11 Six steps on a Somerset cross would be extremely unusual (although not unique: the cross in Chew Magna churchyard has seven tiers of steps, for example, and some crosses in the Forest of Dean also have large numbers of steps): four steps (or less) are much more usual.

3.12 It should be made clear that the earliest drawings of the cross (Pigott in 1827, and Braikenridge in 1840) show four steps as today, although early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcards of the cross do show stones beneath the bottom step. Tiny elements of these are still visible today, and they are clearly the top of the lower stone of the crosses first step as established in the excavation.



*Fig 3: Congresbury village cross 1827 (from Pigott collections of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society)*

Some local credence for there being large support basement structures to crosses is given by the existence of small regular crop marks surrounding the visible lowest step (e.g. Kingston Seymour churchyard cross) or by the truly remarkable case of Wick St Lawrence village cross, where the lowest part of the cross appears to be the uncovered support basement, resulting in the lowest step now being more than a metre high. Given that the geology in these areas is largely alluvial Wentlloog clays, large support structures are hardly surprising.

3.13 Since the Scheduled area of the cross is critical to any further proposals, and it was based on a premise for which there appears to be little confirmed evidence, it was important that the structure of the cross (including that which may be buried beneath adjoining roads) was understood.

3.14 For both practical and academic reasons, the eastern slip road from High Street into Broad Street, outside of Bridge House, was seen to be the most effective area of operations (see plan below).



## 4 Site location

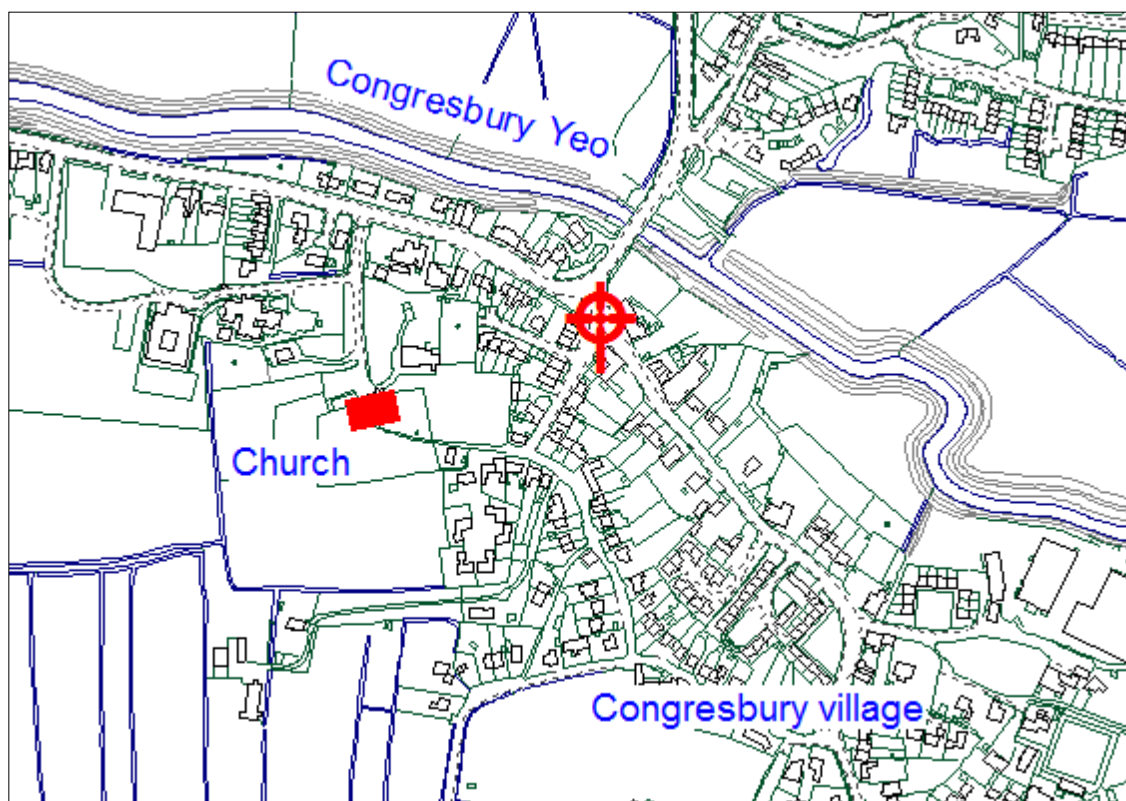
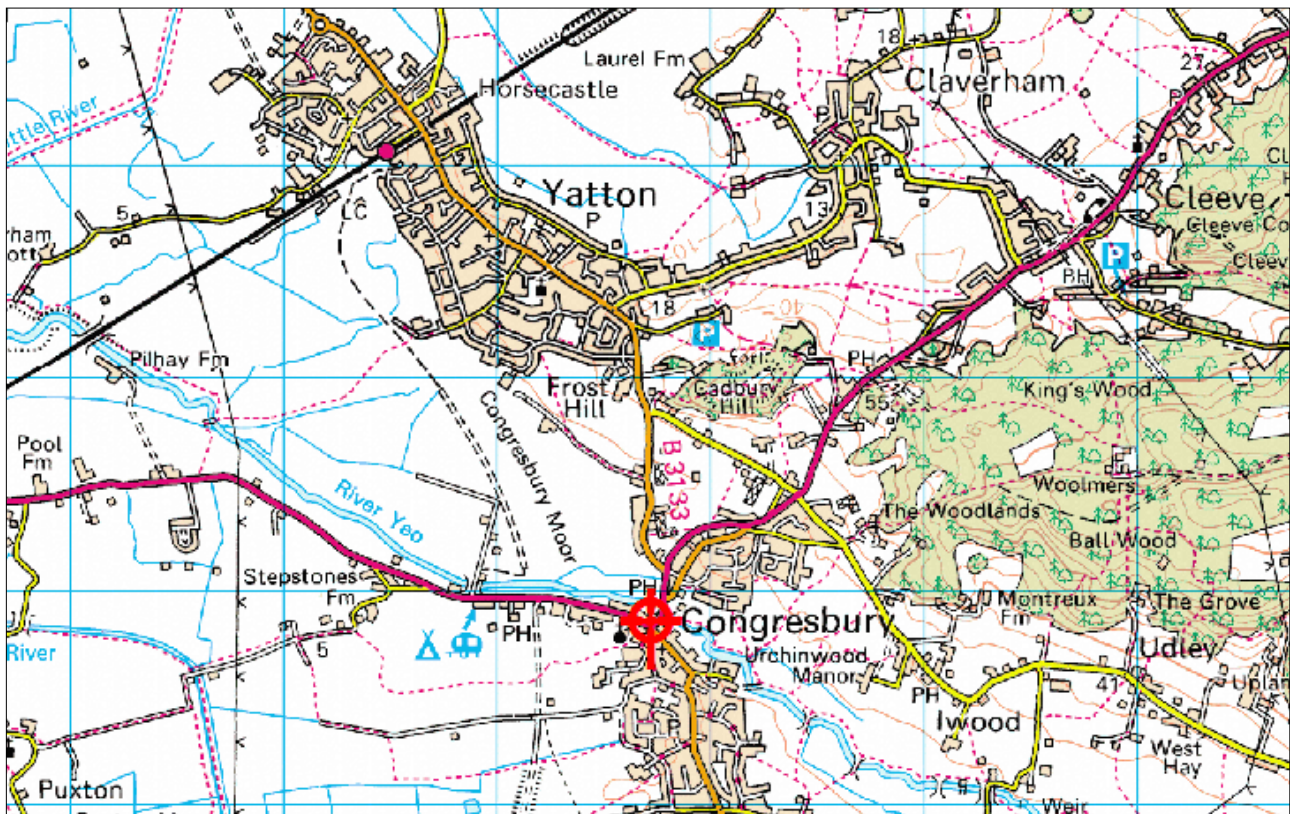


Fig 4: Location of Congresbury cross

4.1 Congresbury Village Cross stands at ST4373463815, at the junction of Broad Street and High Street in the village of Congresbury in North Somerset. This location was, until the rearrangement of both the Bristol Road (A370) and the Congresbury Yeo in the mid-1920s,



at the side of the cross-roads in the centre of the village, but that movement has left it some 40m from the A370.

- 4.2 Local speculation that 'the cross has been moved before' almost certainly arises from the photographs of the Congresbury Bridge and cross taken before 1920 (e.g. Fig 5 below): these show the view down Broad Street (and the cross) from the Bridge, but it is the road and river that have moved, not the cross.
- 4.3 In addition, the presence of small scale maps of 1840 (Congresbury Tithe) and 1818 (Bristol RO 33041/BMC/4/PL1 & 2) clearly indicate the cross in its present position: no evidence was found in the excavation the subject of this report that the cross had ever occupied any position but its present.



*Fig 5: View of Congresbury Cross from Congresbury Bridge in 1914, showing the cross at the crossroads in the centre of the village. The Bridge and road have subsequently been moved further west in the mid-1920s*

## 5 Designations

- 5.1 Congresbury village cross is a Scheduled Monument (since February 1925) (National Monument Number 28824) (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1015505>) (Appendix 4)
- 5.2 It is also a Grade II\* Listed Building, designated February 1961) (ST 46 SW CONGRESBURY C.P. BROAD STREET 4/95 Village Cross 9.2.61 G.V. II\*). (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1158002>). (Appendix 4)
- 5.3 The cross lies within the Congresbury Conservation Area (designated March 1990). (<http://map.n-somerset.gov.uk/her.html>) (Appendix 4)

## 6 Geology and land-use

### 6.1 Solid geology

The village cross lies on the alluvium of the Northmarsh: the Wentloog blue clays were revealed at the lowest point of the excavation some 0.86m below current ground surface. There is insufficient geological information to be sure, but the alluvium may overlay the Mercia Mudstone Group at this point. The geological status of the area may have implications regarding the nature of the structure of the cross (see below). Lidar images (Environment Agency 2005 in North Somerset HER) show the line of Broad Street as a minor feature about 0.5m lower than the land on either side (surrounding the parish church, and the higher land rising towards Brinsea Road).

### 6.2 Soils

Any 'natural' development of soils in this area has been negated by the development of Congresbury village itself, and the surroundings of the cross being part of an active livestock market for centuries. No 'natural' soils were revealed in the excavation.

### 6.3 Watercourses

The cross lies within 35m of the pre-20<sup>th</sup> century course of the Congresbury Yeo, and maps of 1818 (see Fig 6 below) show the former existence of watercourses either side of the site. One runs across The Cross / High Street (where it is crossed by a narrow bridge) from the vicinity of the Ship and Castle, then alongside the east side of Broad Street, to drain into the Moor to the south. This is not depicted any later, and was presumably culverted during the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A further pond is depicted on the map within 10m of the west side of the cross.

### 6.4 Land-use

The site is currently in the public highway, and accessible at all times. Historic use (and potentially the reason for its existence) was as the site for a weekly livestock market and annual fair (from at least the early 13<sup>th</sup> century until the First World War): the effects of this may account for a number of features noted in the excavation.

## 7 Historical and archaeological context

- 7.1 Medieval stone crosses such as Congresbury village cross have largely not been a subject of recent academic study, something which, given their importance in rural religious, economic and social life is a little surprising. They do not even merit a specific mention in the South West Archaeological Research Framework (2007).
- 7.2 Crosses have been the subject of antiquarian interest since the rediscovery of an interest in the 'gothick' in the time around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This has led to collections of drawings (always, of course, of the more visually alluring examples), and often in the precarious state to which centuries of neglect since the Reformation had reduced them. Many market crosses in Somerset, for example, were only recorded as picturesque objects shortly before their destruction (such as Taunton, Nether Stowey and Bruton market crosses).
- 7.3 While the crosses of certain areas, such as Dartmoor National Park, receive the attention of gazetteers, only a few south-west counties have even had more or less inclusive studies (for example Crossing 1902; Harrison 2001, Langdon 1992, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2002; Pooley 1868; Pooley 1877; Pope 1906; Rowe 1973; Starkey 1983; Watkins 1930) and the most inclusive for Somerset is not yet in the public domain (Russett, forthcoming)
- 7.4 Few excavations have ever been carried out on village crosses in northern Somerset, something it seems to largely share with the rest of the United Kingdom. Detailed examinations, such as that of Barry (Thomas 1996) are rare or non-existent.
- 7.5 The supposed village cross at Wraxall in North Somerset, rebuilt in the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century and reconstructed 2007, post-dates 1699 (Broomhead 2007; unpublished in North Somerset HER).
- 7.6 Knowledge of the origins of the crosses is hampered by the surprising flexibility of their surroundings in the past. The village cross at Bleadon, near Weston-super-Mare, for example, is reputed to have been within the village churchyard, but which churchyard boundary has retracted from it (NSHER00042); the opposite has happened at Dundry, near Bristol, where a Grimm drawing in the British Library of 1788 shows the cross outside the churchyard on a village green (<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/topdrawings/>) by the Tithe Map in 1840, it has been engulfed by the churchyard. They were occasionally moved: Wedmore village cross, for example, was moved to a new site in the Borough early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (H Hudson, *pers comm*).
- 7.7 Excavation at the cross would thus validate (or otherwise) the current area Scheduled at the cross.
- 7.8 In gaining such evidence, incidentally, useful prior knowledge of the status of the land beneath the road that is not Scheduled would also be gained, as would the exposure and recording of any 'support basement' to the cross.

### Documentary evidence for Congresbury village cross

- 7.9 The survival of any documents pre-1600 regarding village crosses is a great rarity in Somerset, and even after that date, their seeming ubiquity and air of commonplace means that references were usually incidental.
- 7.10 It is well known that Congresbury village takes its name from *Cyngar sant*, a shadowy early Christian figure whose body was claimed for Congresbury as early as c1000, when 'The book of resting places of the saints' wrote '*St Cyngar the Confessor lies at Congresbury*'. Some 11<sup>th</sup> century carvings discovered in the parish in 1995 have been described as coming from a shrine to St Congar in the parish church at Congresbury (Oakes and Costen 2003)

- 7.11 At Domesday, Congresbury manor was clearly wealthy. It had been seized before the Conquest by King Harold Godwinson (Harold II), and was not fully handed back to the bishop until between 1206 and 1216, by King John (Cran 1983: 29). A further document from February 1227 (*Cal Charter Rolls*) granted that bishop Jocelyn should have 'a fair for two or three days, and a market for one day in the week' on all his manors, which included Congresbury.
- 7.12 It would have been unusual if such a market place did not contain a cross, but of course, this does not necessarily mean that the *present* cross was built at that time.
- 7.13 The bishop passed much of the income of the manor and church at Congresbury to the Dean and Chapter of Wells at some point in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century (Cran 1983:31), and the Dean and Chapter were still major landowners at the time of the deWilstar maps of Congresbury in 1736-9.
- 7.14 The first definitive reference to the cross comes in 1390, in a document dealing with the Dean and Chapter lands in Broad Street (SHC DD/CC/B 131910a /6) which refers to '*la polecross*' there, presumably MidE '*pole*' = body of water and '*cross*' = cross, i.e. the cross by a pond or slow stream, ideally named given the streams visible on the 18<sup>th</sup> century maps of Boad Street (Broomhead, forthcoming).
- 7.15 There is no reference to the cross in the 1567 survey of the manor (BRO 04235), although one of the land holdings there (tenement AU I in 1739 – BRO 33041 BMC/4/20), was referred to as 'by the cross' in 1700.
- 7.16 The ownership after the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century was held by Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol. There are many accounts in the 'ancient leases' section of their documents (now in the Bristol Record Office) which may hold further information regarding the cross. Their accounts (*per* Congresbury Local History Society) only refer to the cross once. In the accounts for 1777/1780 'repairs to the cross' are counted at £1.0.6d (102.5p). It is not known what this entailed, although it may possibly refer to the erection of the 'block and ball' finial. This is as opposed to the number of references to income from permissions to erect 'standings at the fair' around the same period.
- 7.17 An early reference to the importance of the cross as a meeting place is given by the phrase '*Friday morning 20<sup>th</sup> May 1796 at half past nine o'Clock set off from Congresbury cross..*' in the perambulation of that year (B R O 33041 BMC/4/20 (a)). This facet of the cross's importance remained (early photographs of meetings of the local hunt and so on) and still occurs today.
- 7.18 The copy of the deWilstar map of Congresbury of 1818 shows 'ye Cros' with the streams of water in Broad Street at its current position in about 1818 (Fig 6).





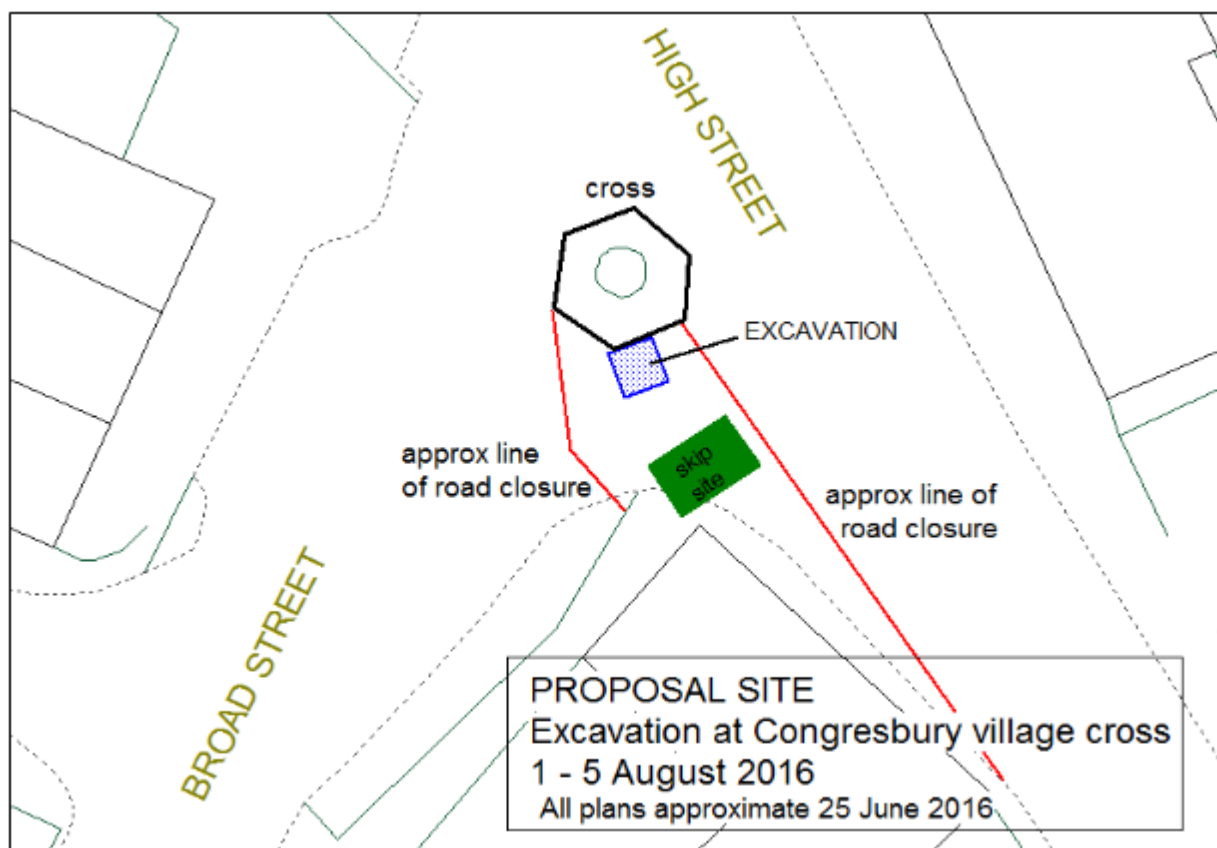
*Fig 6: The earliest known depiction of Congresbury village cross, c1818*

- 7.19 When antiquarian interest in crosses began in c1800, Congresbury cross, being both prominent and by a developing main road (the A370 Bristol Road) naturally drew attention. Rutter (1829) remarked on its 'five steps' (he presumably included the 'starplinth' immediately below the socket as one of them) and a few years later in 1827, the first currently known drawing of the cross (Pigott collection in Somerset Archaeological Society's library) shows the cross much as it is today.
- 7.20 The earliest known photograph is of a view from the east in about 1870 (Congresbury Local History Society collections), which reveals stones visible below the tarmac line of 2016.
- 7.21 The 1885 OS 25" plan depicts the site of the cross and (uniquely) labels it as 'St Congar's Cross'. The source for this name is not known, and no other examples of its use are currently known.
- 7.22 Successive photographs during the 20<sup>th</sup> century largely show the cross in a world without motor traffic, until those taken by Russett in 1974-5, when traffic is recorded queuing at traffic lights on the junction of High Street with the A370. Video of the handover of the cross from the Bristol Charities to the parish in summer 1975, however, shows roads largely free of traffic for the parades that greeted the handover. (Congresbury Local History Society *Ray 2 20 March 2009.wmv*)

## **8 Research aims and objectives**

- 8.1 The prime and initial research aim of this excavation was to explore the sub-surface components of the Scheduled cross (see above). This clarification was aimed to both improve our understanding of this structure (and perhaps medieval crosses in general), and put the reasoning for the area Scheduled at the cross on a firm knowledge base.
- 8.2 The project should also help to address some of the Research Aims laid out in the South-West Archaeological Research Framework (2007):
- Aim 32 Investigate and identify the locations of early medieval religious buildings, locations and landscapes
  - Aim 47 Assess the archaeological potential for studying medieval economy, trade, technology and production
  - Aim 56 Utilise surviving buildings and records to understand liturgical and social change in post-medieval to modern places of worship and cemeteries
  - No specific mention of village (or other) crosses is made in the SWARF despite their important local religious, economic and social functions in the medieval to modern periods

## 9 Methodology



*Fig 7: Road closure area (scale of cross exaggerated for clarity). This was clarified by ground survey before initial works.*

- 9.1 One area of approximately 4m<sup>2</sup> was excavated immediately adjacent to the cross (as shown in plan)
- 9.2 The excavation, post-excavation and recording and publication followed procedures as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation for the site submitted to Historic England (see Section 13: Appendix 1 of this report).
- 9.3 The only deviations from this procedure were

A slight re-arrangement of the road closure area, for practical reasons

Excavation was not total. After site discussions, an area of the road make-up within the trench was not excavated, as it became clear that site conditions (especially the damage by F3) meant nothing practical was to be gained by removing it. To confirm this decision, an area of the road build-up was removed and fully recorded in the south corner of the trench.

## 10 Results

The regrettable severing of the cross from its adjacent stratigraphy by a modern service trench (undetectable by CAT scanner beforehand) has impacted on the usefulness of this work, although information regarding the engineering for construction of the cross had survived. The dearth of pre-17<sup>th</sup> century finds is not unexpected. All north points use the southern edge of the trench as E-W definition.



Fig 8: View from cross of cut [2], F3, showing severity of isolation of the cross from its stratigraphic environs

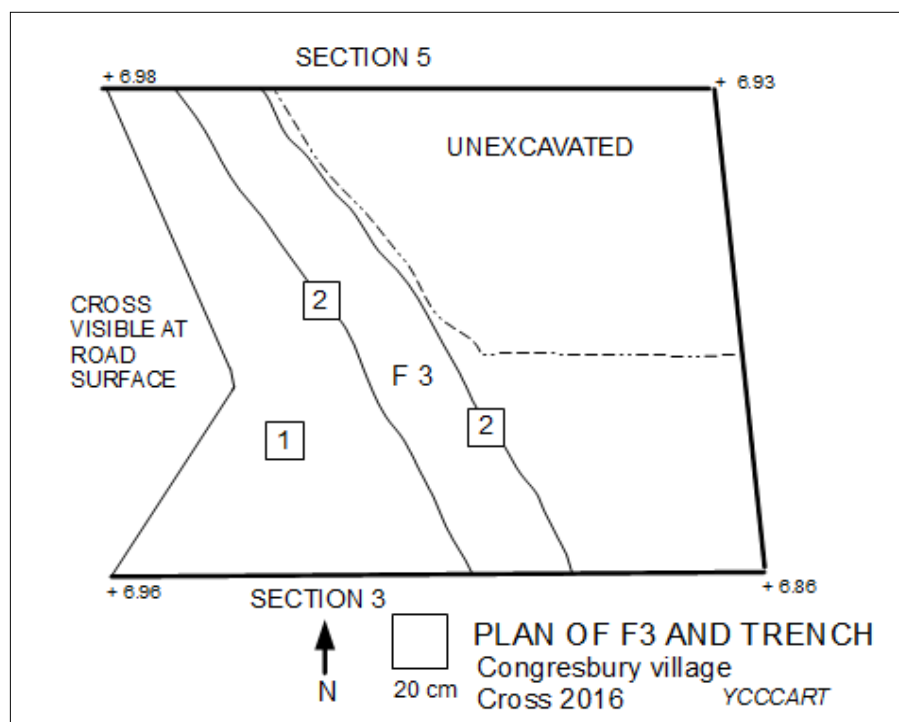


Fig 9: Trench after removal of road surface

## 10.1 Pre-cross structures and levels

10.1.1 F1 lay at the south of the site, below all road layers. Its content, [14], a yellowish-brown (10YR 5/6) gritty soil with angular, mostly Carboniferous Limestone, stone fragments extended beneath the basement of the cross. This was edged by abutment [16], a row of unworked Carboniferous Limestone blocks, with an edge parallel to cut 2, set in a reddish-brown (2.5YR 5/4) slightly silty clay material [15] with charcoal flecks, that also partly overlay 14. Two further Carboniferous Limestone blocks that may have extended this feature NW were disturbed by F3 and could not be reliably identified as part of [16]. They are dotted in Fig 10.

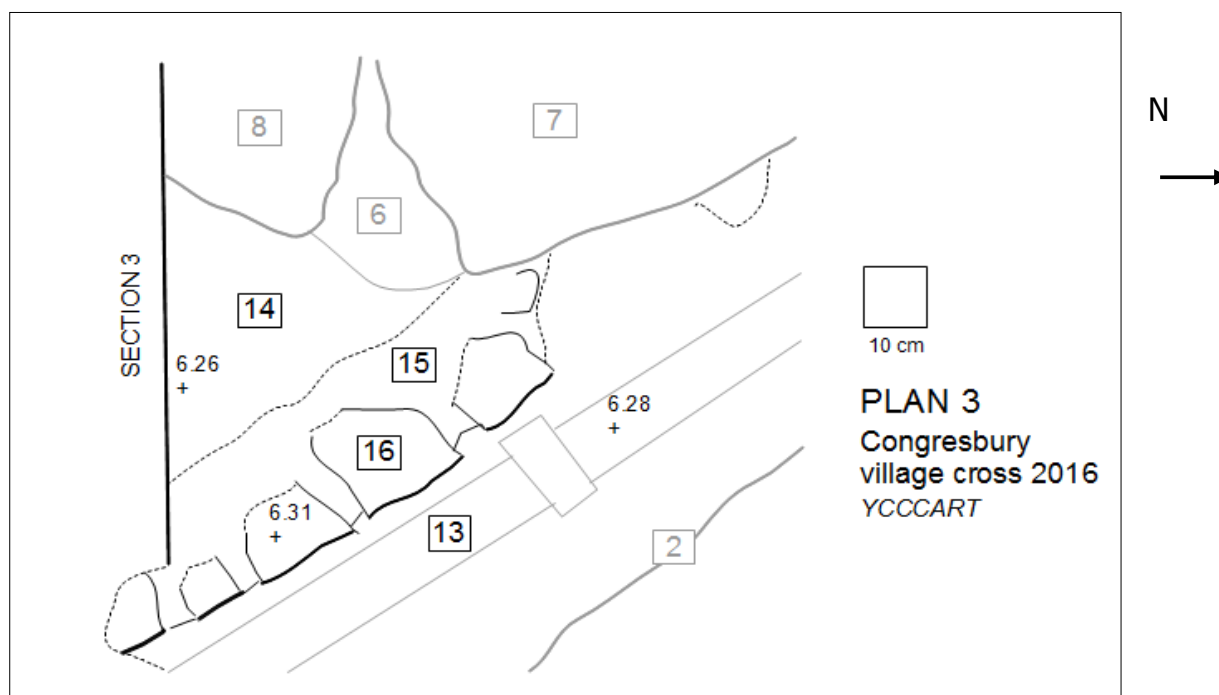


Fig 10: F1 ([14], [15], [16] below cross, [7], [8] stones of cross sub-basement

10.1.2 Unfortunately, no dating evidence was found from any of these contexts, but [14] is not the natural, as this was found to be the blue-grey alluvium of the Northmarsh at other points in the trench. While it may be a dump material to form a working surface for the construction of the cross, this cannot be proven. It is certainly not a 'masons yard' layer of Doulling freestone dust from stone-working as was seen at Wells Cathedral masons yard: indeed, there seems to be little evidence of Doulling stone fragments other than in the cross basement.

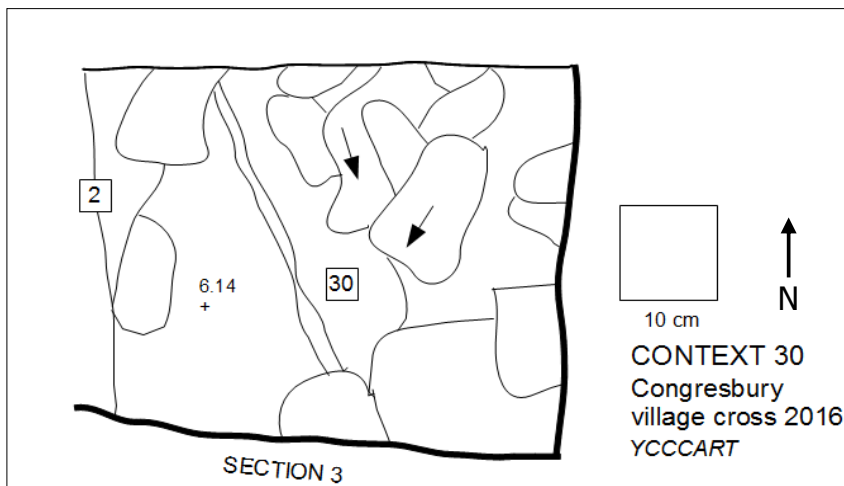
10.1.3 The alignment of the feature's edge does not seem to relate to any modern features in the layout of Broad Street or the cross, and its origin and functions cannot thus be identified with certainty.



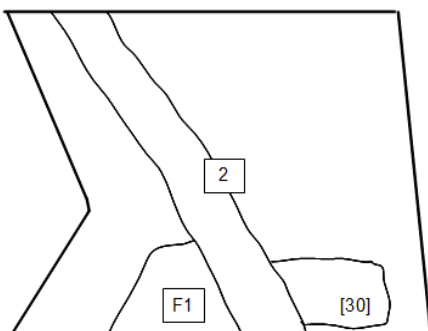


*Fig 11: F1 in context (during cleaning!) Abutment [16] is the line of Carboniferous Limestone blocks parallel to and behind pipe [13]. The construction trench for the pipe has removed the right-hand end of this context. It's stones can be seen to clearly underlie the rubble of [11] the cross sub-basement.*

10.1.4 Another context [30] in the SE corner of the trench, may be a road or working surface dump onto the alluvium. It's age cannot be proved however, beyond that the layer [28/29] above contained a sherd of internally sgraffito decorated East Somerset ware, which should not date earlier than 1650.



*Fig 12: Context 30 at base of the sequence over natural blue-grey clay*



*Fig 13: Location of F1 and context 30 in trench*

## 10.2 The cross – construction phases

- 10.2.1 Context [14] lies above the basal mixed clays [31], (which is the equivalent of [28 / 29] on the east side of F3, although for practical reasons it could not be pursued further below the cross). It runs from one (south) edge of the trench to the other (north edge).
- 10.2.2 Above this, [11] is a layer of hard-packed stone fragments (mostly Douling Freestone, but including Carboniferous Limestone) in a sparse reddish-brown (5YR 4/4) gritty clay matrix, with some evidence for dissolved mortar. This layer (cut and partly damaged by F3) is irregular at the base, but completely level at the top (Fig 14).
- 10.2.3 Atop this were contexts [7] and [8], two large slabs of local Carboniferous Limestone, of which only some 30cm of 8 could be seen, (see discussion). These do not appear to have any working marks, but [7] roughly corresponds to the shape of the worked stone of the cross lowest step above it. Stone 7 extends beyond the north edge of the excavation. A patch of reddish-brown mortary clay [6] between the two stones at first appeared to be contemporary levelling, but since it contained both East Somerset and South Somerset redwares of c1650-1750, cannot be so.

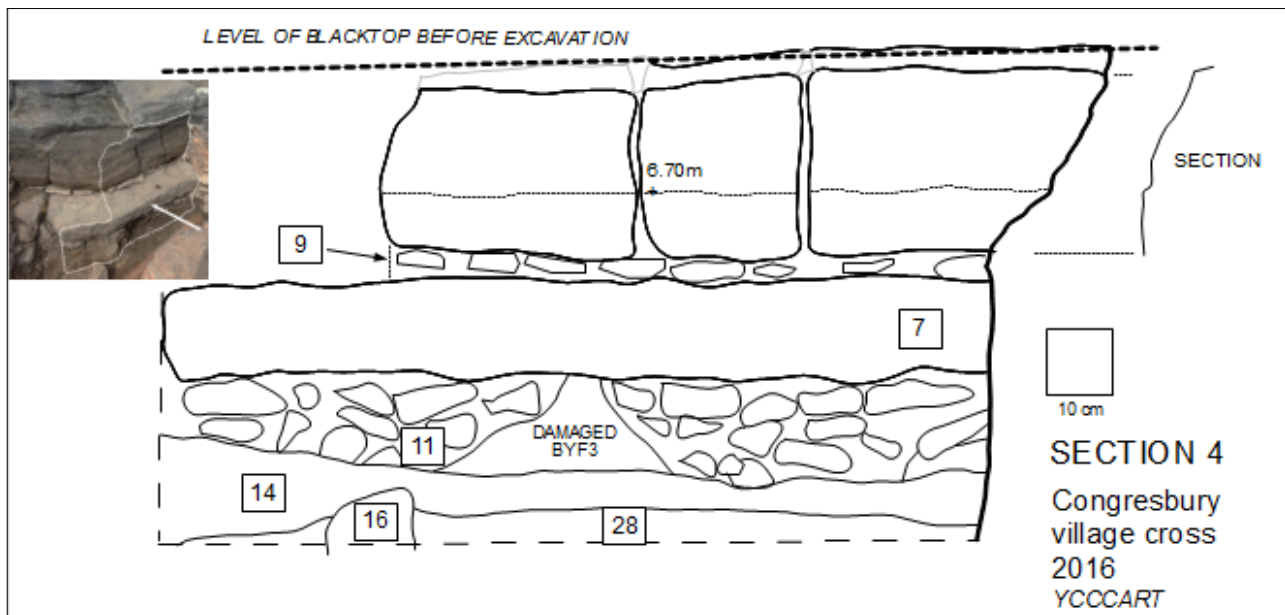
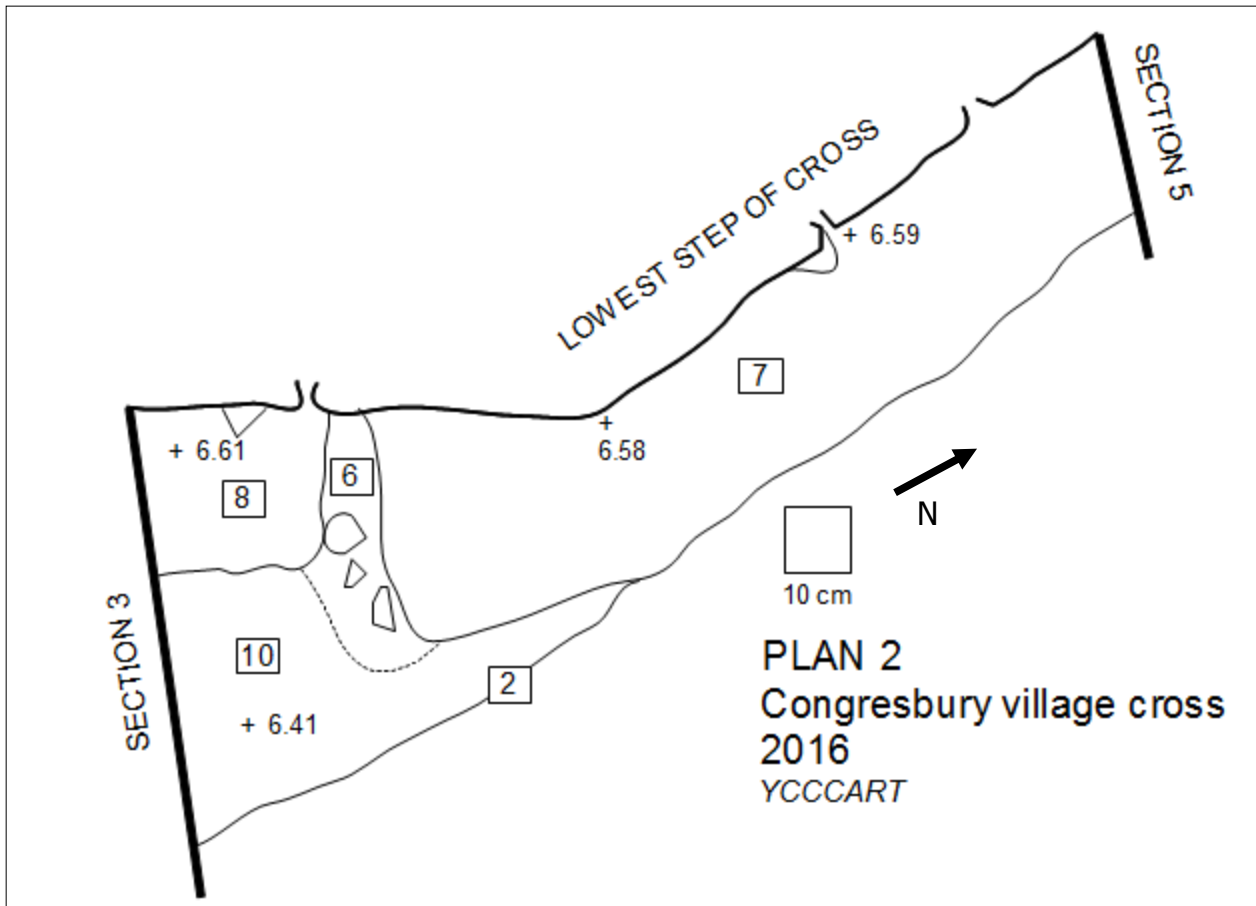


Fig 14: Section 4 with basement and lower stone of cross

- 10.2.4 Context [9] was a row of small 'chock stones' between the basement stones [7] and [8] and the lowest stones of the cross step above. These were of mixed lithology with Douling freestone, Carboniferous Limestone and Pennant Sandstone used, set in an off-white (2.5Y 8/1) mortar, largely eroded at the edge of the cross.
- 10.2.5 Above this, the lowest stone of the cross, of Douling Freestone, was set in a similar off-white mortar, which had eroded to several centimetres depth. The stone expanded at the base, and may have had a cyma-reversa based central section, although obvious damage from passing vehicles and erosion has made this hard to confirm.



*Fig 15: Basement stones [7] and [8] below the lowest cross step. [2] extends along the edge of [7] to the trench boundary at Section 5*

10.2.6 No dating (or datable) material was recovered in this part of the excavation.

### 10.3 Post-cross levels and features

- 10.3.1 Apart from two sherds of late medieval glazed wares (in unstratified context [3] and context [28/9]), the earliest material around the site need not date any earlier than 1620.
- 10.3.2 The construction of trench F3 [cut 2] severed layers to the east of it from those stratigraphically related to the structures of the cross. While the road make-up layers can be equated across the gap with some confidence, the lowest levels are more difficult to reconcile on each side of the disturbance (Fig 16).

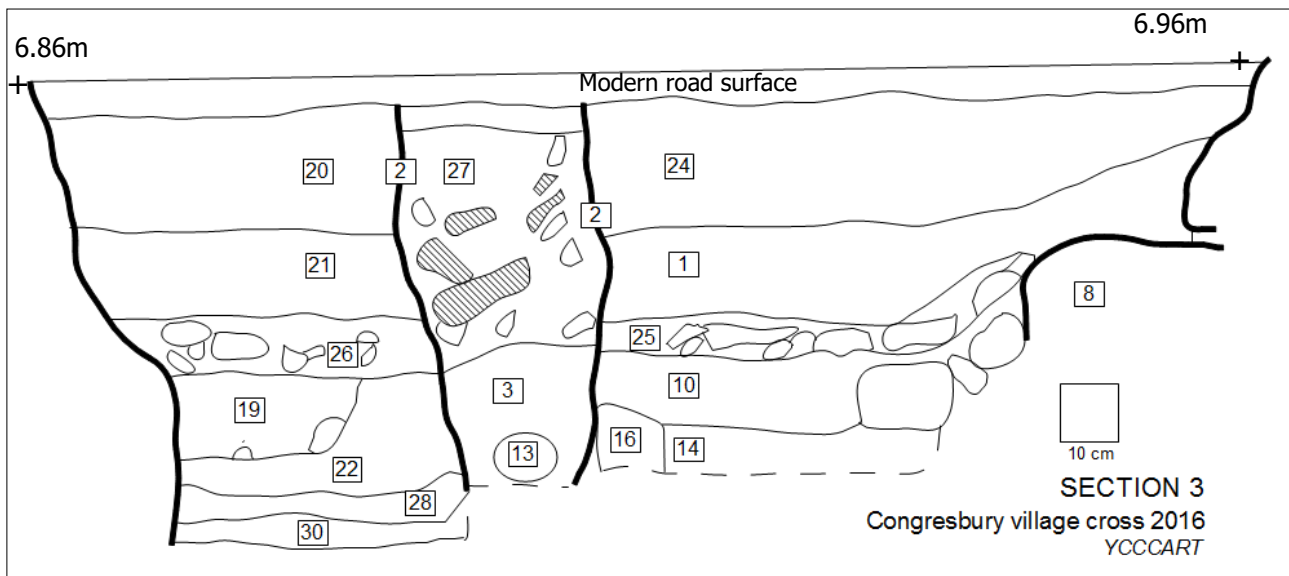


Fig 16: Section 3 (south side of trench)

- 10.3.3 Directly overlying both F 1 and the basement stones of the cross was [10], a reddish brown gritty clay (2.5YR 4/3) containing relatively large numbers of East Somerset redwares of c1650-1750 (with two presumably intrusive minute later sherds). This context lapped against the stones of the cross basement (see above Fig 15), and no contexts were found which were stratigraphically linked or dated to between the erection of the cross and [10]. It may simply be an accumulation of market debris and animal dung and bedding: it does not seem to have an equivalent on the east side of F3.
- 10.3.4 On the east side of F3, the blue-grey alluvium natural was reached. Directly on this lay [30], a potential dump or road or working level (see above). Above this accumulated a wet gritty dark reddish brown clay layer (5YR 3/3), occasionally stony. This has been sampled for soil analysis, but results of this will not be available in time for this report.
- 10.3.5 A stony dump layer [22] lay above this, dark yellowish brown (7.5R 4/4), cut in the corner of the trench by a small pit F2. It was difficult to relate to layers to the west of F3. Some iron nails and two sherds of English pre-industrial stonewares, not earlier than 1650, were the sole dating evidence.
- 10.3.6 On both sides of F3, a thin layer of stones laid predominantly horizontally [25]/[26] comprised mostly Carboniferous Limestone fragments in a sparse reddish brown (5YR 4/4) gritty clay can be seen, presumably a road surface layer. At its western end this context rises sharply in Section 3. This is thought to indicate fairly rapid sagging of the surface into the softer 14 and 22 below, where not supported by the solid structures of the cross.

- 10.3.7 Above this, layer [1]/[21] was a strong, hard context of Carboniferous Limestone fragments (some with layers of limonite) set in a sparse red clay matrix (10YR 5/8). This layer, c0.15m – 0.18m thick was not resolvable into thinner layers, but nor can its accumulation as a series of road surfaces be ruled out. It lay over the basement and lower step of the cross, and was encountered immediately beneath the modern blacktop at the cross (see Section 5 below).
- 10.3.8 The context above this ([20]/[24]) was a similar strong hard context of Carboniferous Limestone set in a redder clay matrix (2.5YR 5/6), again thinning out at its western end, to the point where it was not immediately detectable below the blacktop on first revealing the site, [1] still covering the area by the cross. This may, of course, imply that some of the settling and / or sinking of the road surface may have happened after [1]/[21] was in place.
- 10.3.9 These road make-up layers contain little dating evidence. [21] contained C19 pipe stems, while [20] contained similar pipe stems and a small sherd of yellow slipware. Close to the cross, [1] contained more finds, but these must largely be written off for dating purposes by their relationship to the cross and its users.



## 10.4 20<sup>th</sup> century phase (see Fig 16 above)

- 10.4.1 The continuous topping up of the blacktop in Broad Street has caused the level of the road around the cross to rise, but only by a few centimetres at most: alterations to the camber of the main road (the Cross / High Street) in the 1920s for the (strangely under-recorded and reported) replacement of Congresbury Bridge and realignment of the Yeo before 1924, and again with major junction changes in the 1970s, do not seem to have greatly affected the part of Broad Street excavated. Photographs of c1890 and 1974 (Figs 18 and 19) show this: around the rest of the cross, tiny sections of the lower part of the lowest step can still be seen between the blacktop and the cross.
- 10.4.2 The major 20<sup>th</sup> century feature at the site is F3, the BT trench crossing the excavation site from NW to SE, and effectively severing the cross from its adjacent stratigraphy. This was obviously carried out post-1925 when the cross was Scheduled.

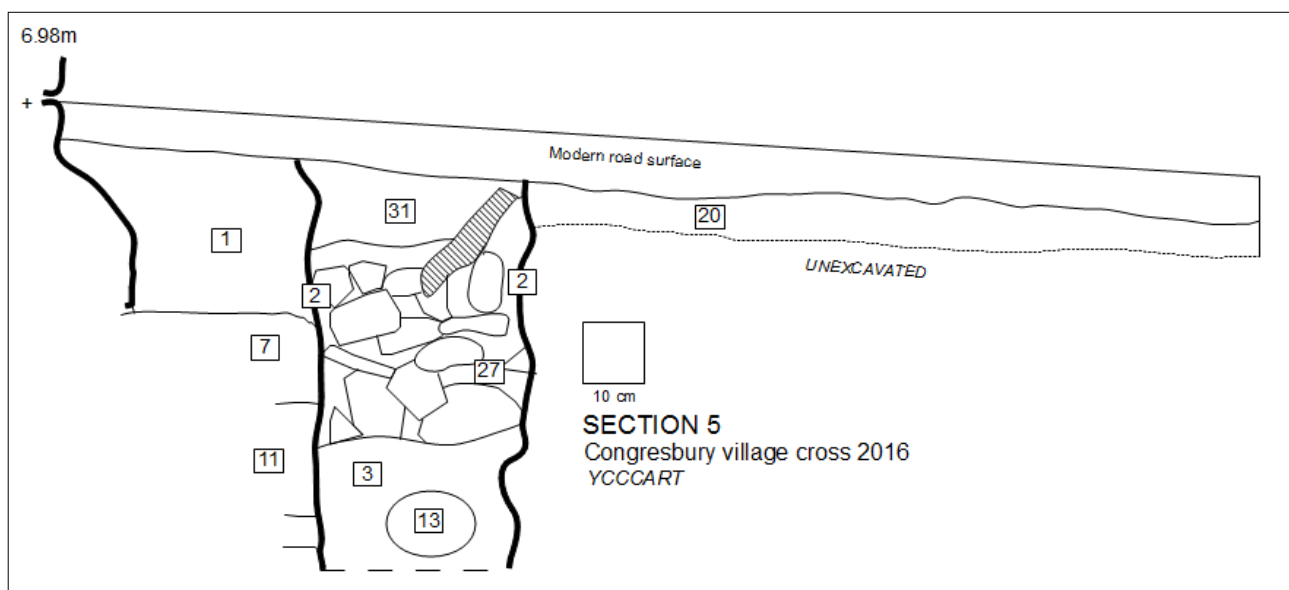


Fig 17: Cut 2 (F3) skirting the edge of the cross basement

- 10.4.3 The cut for F3 [2], ran alongside the basement [7] of the cross, with possibly some 0.05m of [4] remaining between it and the cross. The trench had dug into context [11], the sub-basement of the cross, and may have also destroyed the northern end of [16]: two large loose Carboniferous Limestone blocks were in its backfill [3], but may have slumped in from their original sites.
- 10.4.4 The lower backfill [3] of the trench contained more finds than any adjacent contexts, and it may have been derived as backfill from more domestic areas closer to the Ship and Castle inn, across the main road. Fragments of an eighteenth century South Somerset dripping pan, for example, would hardly be expected to be found around a cross.
- 10.4.5 Trench 2 had pipe [13] laid in the base of it, with backfill [3] above, and backfill [27], characterised by lumps of blacktop in its fill was above this. The feature was then sealed with blacktop, which lay stratigraphically below the modern surface of the road.
- 10.4.6 The effect on the preservation of stratigraphy around the cross was acute – perhaps questions should be asked of the legality or otherwise of this intrusion into the protected area of a Scheduled Monument.



*Fig 18: Left: Congresbury Cross c 1890  
(Congresbury Local History Group, per Chris Short)*



*Fig 19: Left:  
Congresbury Cross  
1974 (Vince Russett  
archive)*

## 10.5 Discussion

- 10.5.1 There do not seem to be many (if any) direct comparanda for this work. The occasional record has been made where a cross has been damaged by traffic (e.g. Clowne in Derbyshire – Sheppard 2005); or excavations have produced no new information, such as Shrivenham, Wiltshire (Maw 1987). How representative the results are remains to be seen: an initial field examination of crosses in the area close to Congresbury reveals no obvious pattern to basements (where visible).
- 10.5.2 The pre-cross levels (F1, for example) produced no dated or datable finds. They may well be connected with the construction of the cross itself, since [11] the rubble sub-basement of the cross, appears to directly overlie [14]. If so, the level [14], edged by abutment [16] may have provided a 'stabilisation surface' for the construction to begin.
- 10.5.3 The first act in the construction of the cross itself seems to have been to spread the rubble sub-basement [11], a well-packed layer with occasional mortar and a completely level top surface supporting the basement stones [6] and [7].
- 10.5.4 Presumably the masons were aware of issues of stability, since 14<sup>th</sup> century events at Wells Cathedral itself (where the heightening of the tower around 1331 caused serious instability in the central tower, ingeniously solved by William Joy with his renowned 'scissor-arches' of 1338-48), assuming the cross was constructed after this date.
- 10.5.5 The blue-grey alluvium of the Northmarsh (which forms the natural geology of this site, and which was reached during the excavation) has a very poor bearing ability: its California Bearing Ratio tends to be around 3 – 4% (compared to crushed and compacted limestone of 100%) ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California\\_bearing\\_ratio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_bearing_ratio)).
- 10.5.6 The upper part of the cross (the section above the basement) can be calculated to have weighed very close to 60 tonnes when first erected (from the volume of the monument and the known density of Doulting Stone), although clearly, wear will have reduced this since the medieval period. The infamous 'leaning tower' of the church of Puxton (an adjacent parish) has borne testimony to this poor bearing ability since not long after its erection. It would have been even more evident in the presence of running water at the side of Broad Street, still visible when the first maps of the parish were made in 1736-9.
- 10.5.7 The construction of the rubble sub-basement was clearly a response to this lack of bearing ability. Even a casual glance at Fig 14 shows the marked tendency of the stones of the upper layer of the rubble to align their longitudinal axes towards the formation of a surface: this may indicate initial stabilisation of the rubble by ramming before the next layer was put in place. Such engineering would probably be necessary for further construction.
- 10.5.8 Above this, the substructure of the cross was further stabilised by the use of large basement stones [7] and [8], presumed to be an example of a layer under the whole cross. These stones are of a fine-grained carboniferous limestone. They appear to bear no tooling marks, but look worn at their leading edges. An obvious local source for these stones would be at Claverham, 2.5km north of Congresbury cross. A layer of individual flat boulders lies about a metre below the surface at this location (a local enough phenomenon not to occur in regional geology maps). These have been used for floors in an area otherwise poorly provided with stone. YCCART excavated an ox-house in 2005 on Claverham Moor, where a large percentage of the floor area was composed of these (unworked) stones. They are locally known as 'Claverham Stones' (*pers comm.* J Atwell,

Claverham Court Farm). The basement stones (assuming that the section of the cross examined is typical) would themselves weigh 8 – 10 tonnes, and would easily have been heavy enough to 'charge' the basement for a while, before proceeding with construction of the cross once stability was assured. The possible wear on their outer edges may imply that there were periods of time when these outer edges were exposed in the road surface – such exposure may have contributed to the local supposition that the cross possessed two further sub-surface steps.

- 10.5.9 It is not clear if the rubble sub-basement of the cross extended beyond the basement stones [7] and [8], such information being removed by F3.
- 10.5.10 The basement stones [7] and [8] projected by an average of 0.30m below the base of the constructed cross. The stones of the lowest step of the cross were chocked with a line of stone fragments of various lithologies [11], with no apparent mortar. The upper surface of these stones marks the limit of what was probably intended to be seen of the cross.
- 10.5.11 No recognisable layer of detritus from stone working was detected at the site, and it is probably safe to assume that the cross was manufactured elsewhere (possibly at the known medieval masons yard on the south side of Wells cathedral) and assembled at site.
- 10.5.12 The success of this medieval engineering in stabilising such a large structure in Northmarsh conditions is remarkable: apart from Wick St Lawrence village cross, no other alluvial geologies in Somerset or North Somerset support large crosses – indeed over most of the Somerset Levels, no crosses survive at all (Russett, forthcoming).
- 10.5.13 This structure is larger than the majority of other known village or churchyard crosses in Somerset, presumably indicating the status of its founder (the bishopric of Bath and Wells) and of the market at Congresbury. Virtually all the manors held by the Bishop at Domesday (<http://opendomesday.org/name/570700/wells-st-andrew-bishop-of/>) became, or already were, market villages or towns.
- 10.5.14 Congresbury stands at the junction of the alluvial low lands of the Northmarsh, and the higher metalliferous limestone of Broadfield Down, and at the highest point of navigation of the Congresbury Yeo. Its links with Wells (since before the Norman Conquest) and Bristol in the post-medieval period could only enhance that status. This makes it an obvious point for fairs and markets, with good communications.
- 10.5.15 The cross would have formed the focus for this fair and market, situated in the post-medieval period in what is now Broad Street, High Street, The Cross and the road that has become the modern A370. There are hints in the layout of the village that a larger market place has now been infilled, possibly in the late medieval period.

## 10.6 Finds

- 10.6.1 The modest number of finds is not unexpected in a small, non-domestic evaluation, largely beneath the surface of an active road.
- 10.6.2 No finds (other than two sherds of later medieval glazed jugs – see above – residual in later layers) dated earlier than c1620.
- 10.6.2 The ceramics from the site are mostly of hollow vessels, largely of mugs or tankards, hardly surprising in the vicinity of a long-lived public house and market / fair. Clay pipe was also a common find (presumably for the same reason), although only one marked bowl was found (a mid-18<sup>th</sup> century bowl fragment with 'I S' marking the spur). Unfortunately, there were at least six Bristol makers with these initials at the time (Russett, 1987: 7).
- 10.6.3 Ceramics were identified by comparison to the Bristol Pottery Type series (since in view of the strong tenorial links, this seemed appropriate). By far the most typical ceramic in all the contexts were the products of east Somerset ('Wanstrow'), with a few sherds of south Somerset ('Donyatt') wares, and occasional travelled ceramic, such as North Devon wares and two sherds of 17<sup>th</sup> century Frechen tankards from Germany, a fairly common find in Bristol (Good 1987: 85).
- 10.6.4 Non-ceramic finds were largely small iron nails (some identifiably horse-shoe nails), small numbers of post-medieval glass bottle fragments, and the tip of a 19<sup>th</sup> century slate 'pencil'.
- 10.6.4 No finds warranted illustration. Appendix 6 lists finds by context, with accompanying notes and a (brief) ceramic type-fabric index.

## 11 Recommendations

- 11.1 It became clear during research before and after the excavation that in most cases, little or nothing is known of the below-ground structures of village crosses, Scheduled or otherwise. For obvious practical reasons, these will vary with time, geology and the wealth (or otherwise) of the commissioners of the crosses.

**Recommendation 1: It is recommended that statutory and other protection of village and churchyard crosses more clearly reflect the potential for the survival of significant underground structures at the sites**

- 11.2 The findings of this excavation mean that the wording of both Listing and Scheduling documents for the Congresbury Village Cross are in need of amendment, to reflect the lack of the 'two steps below the tarmac' formerly supposed to exist, and the presence of the stone basement of the cross. The new information regarding the subsurface structures at the site does not seem to provide reason for changing the area protected by Scheduling around the cross.

**Recommendation 2: It is recommended that the wording of the two documents be changed to reflect the new information in this report and elsewhere.**

Suggested forms of words are included below.

Listing document: (current)

4/95 Village Cross 9.2.61 G.V. II\*

Village Cross. C15 with C19 shaft finial. Limestone. Octagonal on plan with 4 tiers of steps (formerly 6 - two are buried by the raising of the road level) up to square socket which has broached shoulders. Shaft square on plan also has broached shoulders and is 3 metres high. C19 finial to shaft apex with block base and ball. The whole structure is 6 metres high and forms an important visual element at the head of Broad Street opposite the Ship and Castle Inn (q.v.). The cross is a scheduled ancient monument, Avon No. 111. (Charles Pooley, *The Old Stone Crosses of Somerset*, 1877).

Listing document (suggested amendment)

4/95 Village Cross 9.2.61 G.V. II\*

Village Cross. **Pre-1390** with C19 shaft finial. Limestone. Octagonal on plan with 4 tiers of steps, **the lowest of which is partly buried by the raising of the road level, with a projecting buried stone basement beneath**, up to square socket which has broached shoulders. Shaft square on plan also has broached shoulders and is 3 metres high. C19 finial to shaft apex with block base and ball. The whole structure is 6 metres high and forms an important visual element at the head of Broad Street opposite the Ship and Castle Inn (q.v.). The cross is a scheduled monument, **UID: 28824** (Charles Pooley, *The Old Stone Crosses of Somerset*, 1877).

Scheduling document (current)

The monument includes a cross situated at a crossroads in Congresbury, the roads leading to Bristol, Weston-super-Mare, Paul's Causeway and Churchill. The cross has a four step octagonal calvary, an octagonal plinth, square socket stone, shaft and head. The first step of the calvary is 5m in diameter and 0.2m high, with each side of the octagon measuring 2.1m.



The step is benched and has a deep drip. The second, third and fourth steps are each 0.4m high, with octagonal sides measuring 1.75m, 1.4m and 1m respectively. Above the fourth step is an octagonal plinth which is 0.3m high, and each side of which is 0.7m long. This supports the square base of the socket stone which is 1.15m wide and 0.9m high with a central socket 0.4m square. Convex broaches at the angles of the socket stone produce an octagonal top. The c.2.5m high shaft has a square stopped base, and then tapers to a restored head comprising a square block of stone with a ball on top. The head of the cross was restored some time before the mid 19th century. The rest of the cross is considered to be 15th century and is Listed Grade II\*. The cross is reputed to have two further calvary steps which were buried when the level of the road was raised some time before the mid 19th century. The remains of the buried calvary steps are included in the scheduling. The tarmac and make up of the road around the cross is excluded from the scheduling where this falls within its protective margin, but the ground beneath is included.

#### Scheduling document (suggested amendment)

The monument includes a cross situated at a crossroads in Congresbury, the roads leading to Bristol, Weston-super-Mare, Paul's Causeway and Churchill. The cross has a four step octagonal calvary, an octagonal plinth, square socket stone, shaft and head. The first step of the calvary is 5m in diameter and 0.2m high, with each side of the octagon measuring 2.1m. The step is benched and has a deep drip. The second, third and fourth steps are each 0.4m high, with octagonal sides measuring 1.75m, 1.4m and 1m respectively. Above the fourth step is an octagonal plinth which is 0.3m high, and each side of which is 0.7m long. This supports the square base of the socket stone which is 1.15m wide and 0.9m high with a central socket 0.4m square. Convex broaches at the angles of the socket stone produce an octagonal top. The c.2.5m high shaft has a square stopped base, and then tapers to a restored head comprising a square block of stone with a ball on top. The head of the cross was restored some time before the mid 19th century. The rest of the cross is documented in 1390 and is Listed Grade II\*. The lower part of the first step stands on a projecting stone basement which were both buried when the level of the road was raised some time before the mid 19th century. The remains of the buried structures are included in the scheduling. The tarmac and make up of the road around the cross is excluded from the scheduling where this falls within its protective margin, but the ground beneath is included.



## 12 References

This list of references is by no means inclusive, but most sources of information for stone crosses are non-academic and should be viewed with some care.

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## **13 Appendices**

### **13.1 Written scheme of Investigation**

YCCART

Yatton Congresbury Cleeve and Claverham Archaeological Research Team

[yccart.co.uk](http://yccart.co.uk)

Congresbury Village Cross, Broad Street,  
Congresbury, Somerset

Scheduled Monument 28824  
North Somerset HER 377

Written Scheme of Investigation for  
Archaeological Excavation  
HE Ref: S00141731

NGR ST4373463815

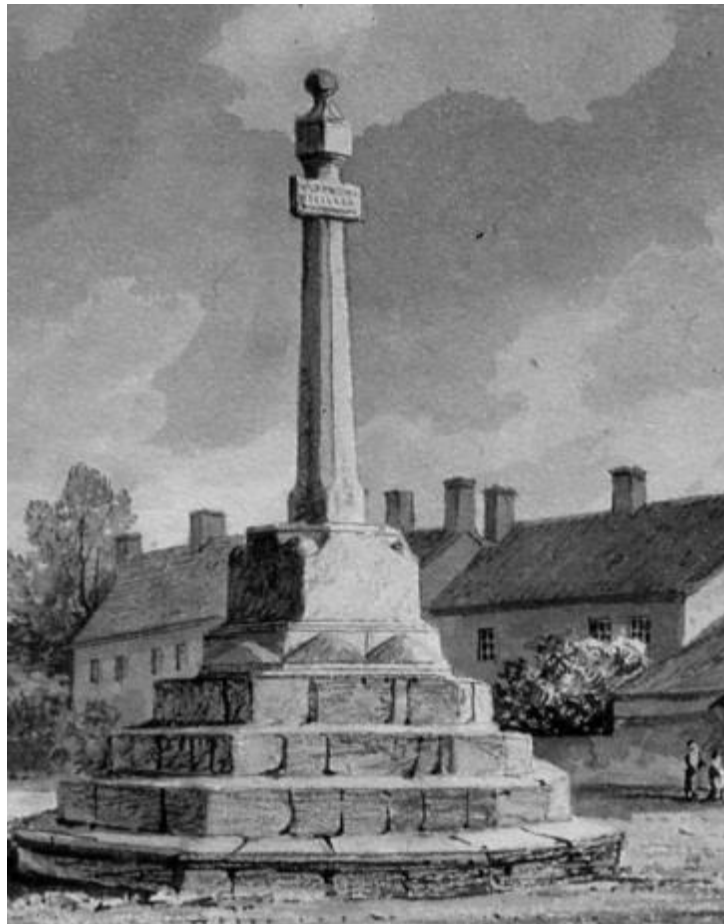
July 2016  
Client: Congresbury Parish Council

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## 1 INTRODUCTION AND PRE-EXCAVATION PREPARATION

- 1.1 This investigation forms an initial phase of what is hoped will be an archaeological non-intervention recording programme and long-term monitoring programme for the cross.
- 1.2 Congresbury Village Cross stands at ST4373463815, at the junction of Broad Street and High Street in the village of Congresbury in North Somerset. It is a Scheduled Monument (since February 1925) (National Monument Number 28824) and a Grade II\* Listed Building. It lies within the Congresbury Conservation Area (designated 1990).
- 1.3 Congresbury village cross (hereafter 'the cross', and not to be confused with the cross in Congresbury churchyard, also a Scheduled Monument, but not referred to further in this document) was constructed before 1390, almost certainly to act as a market focus for the Congresbury Market and Fair (Broomhead, *in prep*). There seems to be no specific charter for the fair, but documents from 1229 imply its existence (Wells *Liber Albus II*, 494). The market survived long enough to be photographed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is possible that the very irregular wear patterns seen on the stonework of the steps of the cross are partly a result of this use.
- 1.4 Initially the owners of this cross were the Lords of the Manor, to whom Queen Elizabeth's Hospital in Bristol were successors. This body's successors handed the ownership of the cross to Congresbury Parish Council in the 1975, and it is a formally registered asset of the Council.
- 1.5 The cross is in a vulnerable setting, lying as it does immediately next to the link road from A370 to A38 (Congresbury to Churchill), with a heavy and seemingly increasing traffic load. The vulnerability of such structures to traffic can be seen locally from the examples of the partial demolition of the Market Cross at Cheddar, twice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, by small vehicles (private cars). Vehicles on this road regularly drive over the lowest step or hit the structure of the cross (both personally witnessed 04 June 2016).
- 1.6 Such problems with traffic threatening the structures of village crosses are not new, nor are measures to protect them – in 1767/8, the churchwardens of Cheddar paid one shilling (5p) to erect '*glansing stones against the Pillars of the Cross*' (SHC Cheddar Churchwardens accounts DD\SAS/C795/SE/14 and retained in Cheddar church)
- 1.7 Such damage to a parish-owned and Scheduled asset has focussed the community mind on the vulnerability of Congresbury cross, and in discussions in early 2016 between parish council, district council and Historic England, initial thoughts were put forward as to how some degree of protection for the structure might be achieved.
- 1.8 Since this structure has all the statutory status outlined above, protective engineering will require consents (especially Scheduled Monument Consent) for such works. Let it be clear that none of the below should affect the status of the *setting* of the cross.

- 1.9 The Scheduling Document (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1015505>) for the cross includes this phrase:  
*'The cross is reputed to have two further calvary steps which were buried when the level of the road was raised some time before the mid 19th century. The remains of the buried calvary steps are included in the scheduling. The tarmac and make up of the road around the cross is excluded from the scheduling where this falls within its protective margin, but the ground beneath is included.'*
- 1.10 The earliest written record of these proposed further two steps seems to be in Pooley's 'Old Stone Crosses of Somerset' (1877), but the story is remarkably resilient and is still known today.
- 1.11 Six steps on a Somerset cross would be extremely unusual (although not unique: the cross in Chew Magna churchyard has seven tiers of steps, for example, and some crosses in the Forest of Dean also have large numbers of steps): four steps (or less) are much more usual.
- 1.12 It should be made clear that the earliest drawings of the cross (Pigott in 1827, and Braikenridge in 1840) show four steps as today, although early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcards of the cross do show stones beneath the bottom step. These may, of course, only be from a basement structure supporting the cross, and do not appear to project beyond the lowest visible step.



*Congresbury village cross 1827 (from Pigott collections of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society)*

Some local credence for there being large support basement structures to crosses is given by the existence of small regular crop marks surrounding the visible lowest step (e.g. Kingston Seymour churchyard cross) or by the truly remarkable case of Wick St Lawrence village cross, where the lowest part of the cross appears to be the uncovered support basement, resulting in the lowest step now being more than a metre high. Given that the geology in these areas is largely alluvial Wentlloog clays, large support structures would hardly be surprising.

- 1.13 Since the Scheduled area of the cross is critical to any further proposals, and it is based on a premise for which there appears to be little confirmed evidence, it is important that the structure of the cross (including that which may be buried beneath adjoining roads) is understood. It is proposed to examine the structure of the cross below the current ground surface by archaeological excavation.
- 1.14 Clearly, a Health and Safety statement and Insurance cover will be agreed and in place before any works begin. Necessary Highways procedures have been put in place in order for work to be carried out. Current utility plans are also in place.
- 1.15 For both practical and academic reasons, the eastern slip road from High Street into Broad Street, outside of Bridge House, is seen to be the most effective area of operations (see plan below).
- 1.16 The operations necessitate closing this slip road to traffic for one week (Monday morning to Friday evening, with the option of continuing *at maximum* for the following week)



## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

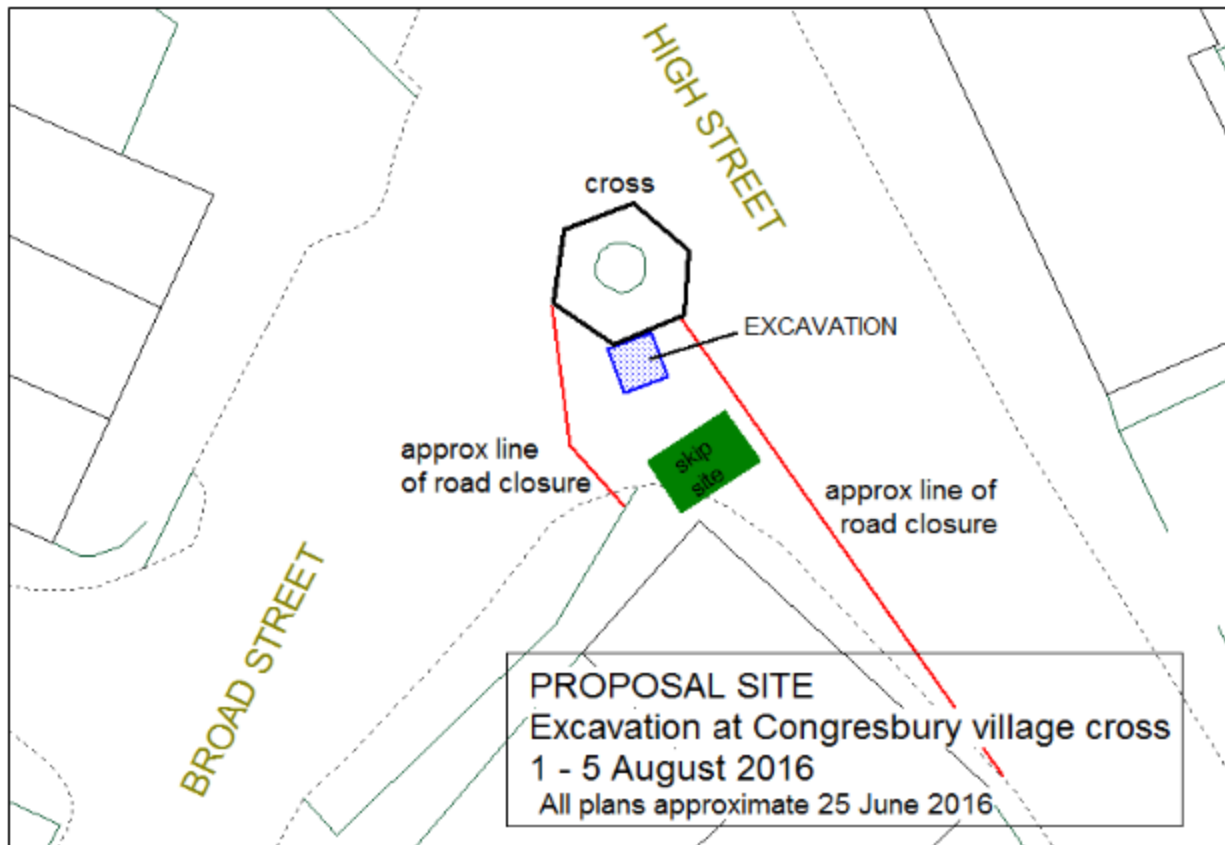
- 2.1 Medieval stone crosses such as Congresbury village cross have largely not been a subject of recent academic study, something which, given their importance in rural religious, economic and social life is a little surprising. They do not even merit a specific mention in the South West Archaeological Research Framework (2007).
- 2.2 Crosses have been the subject of antiquarian interest since the rediscovery of an interest in the 'gothick' in the time around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This has led to collections of drawings (always, of course, of the more visually alluring examples), and often in the precarious state to which centuries of neglect since the Reformation had reduced them. Many market crosses in Somerset, for example, were only recorded as picturesque objects before their destruction (such as Taunton, Nether Stowey and Bruton).
- 2.3 While the crosses of certain areas, such as Dartmoor National Park, receive the attention of gazetteers, only a few south-west counties have even had more or less inclusive studies (for example Crossing 1902; Harrison 2001, Langdon 1992, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2002; Pooley 1868; Pooley 1877; Pope 1906; Rowe 1973; Starkey 1983; Watkins 1930) and the most inclusive for Somerset is not yet in the public domain (Russett, forthcoming)
- 2.4 Few excavations have ever been carried out on village crosses in northern Somerset, something it seems to largely share with the rest of the United Kingdom. Detailed examinations, such as that of Barry (Thomas 1996) are rare or non-existent.
- 2.5 The supposed village cross at Wraxall in North Somerset, rebuilt in the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century and reconstructed 2007, post-dates 1699 (Broomhead 2007; unpublished MS in North Somerset HER).
- 2.6 Knowledge of the origins of the crosses is hampered by the surprising flexibility of their surroundings in the past. The village cross at Bleadon, near Weston-super-Mare, for example, is reputed to have been within the village churchyard, but which churchyard boundary has retracted from it (NSHER00042); the opposite has happened at Dundry, near Bristol, where a Grimm drawing in the British Library of 1788 shows the cross outside the churchyard on a village green: by the Tithe Map in 1840, it has been engulfed by the churchyard. They were occasionally moved: Wedmore village cross, for example, was moved to a new site in the Borough early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (H Hudson, *pers comm*).
- 2.7 Excavation at the cross will thus validate (or otherwise) the current area Scheduled at the cross.
- 2.8 In gaining such evidence, incidentally, useful prior knowledge of the status of the land beneath the road that is not Scheduled would also be gained, as will the exposure and recording of any 'support basement' to the cross.

### **3 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The prime and initial research aim of this excavation is to explore the sub-surface components of the Scheduled Cross (see above). This clarification will both improve our understanding of this structure (and perhaps medieval crosses in general), and put the reasoning for the area Scheduled at the cross on a firm knowledge base.
- 3.2 The project should also help to address some of the Research Aims laid out in the South-West Archaeological Research Framework (2007):
- Aim 32 Investigate and identify the locations of early medieval religious buildings, locations and landscapes
  - Aim 47 Assess the archaeological potential for studying medieval economy, trade, technology and production
  - Aim 56 Utilise surviving buildings and records to understand liturgical and social change in post-medieval to modern places of worship and cemeteries
  - No specific mention of village (or other) crosses is made in the SWARF despite their important local religious, economic and social functions in the medieval to modern periods

## 4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 One area of approximately 4m<sup>2</sup> will be excavated immediately adjacent to the cross (as shown in plan)



Proposed road closure area (scale of cross exaggerated for clarity). This will, of course, be clarified by ground survey before initial works.

- 4.2 A contingency for stripping up to a further 2m<sup>2</sup> has been allowed for should the circumstances of the excavation require it. This contingency would only be activated following dialogue between all parties.
- 4.3 The excavation area will be accurately located using Ordnance Survey data, in order to fully relate it to the visible standing structure of the cross. The site will be scanned prior to excavation using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT), operated by accredited personnel.
- 4.4 Removal of tarmac surface ('blacktop') will be undertaken by cutting with a disc cutter under the direct supervision of an archaeologist. All subsequent excavation will be carried out by hand under the supervision of the site director. A metal detector will be used throughout the programme and a log of its use will be kept. The resultant surfaces will be cleaned as necessary and planned.
- 4.5 Hand excavation will be carefully undertaken and will follow the stratigraphy of any encountered archaeological layers, features and/or deposits. In certain circumstances hand excavation by pick and/or mattock and shovel may be undertaken but will only be utilised in respect of homogenous low-grade deposits. Such techniques will not be used for features such as burials, where careful hand

excavation is required.

- 4.7 It is intended that excavation will be total, but since the excavation involves a Scheduled structure constant attention will be given to the priority of preservation *in situ* of structures and deposits attached to or related to the cross.
- Ditches and gullies will have all relationships defined, investigated and recorded. A sufficient length of each feature will be excavated to determine its character over its entire course, and the possibility of recuts of parts, not just the whole, of features will be considered.
  - All pits will initially be half-sectioned and fully recorded. Pits may subsequently be fully excavated to facilitate 100% collection of artefact assemblages.
  - Post and stake holes not clearly forming part of a structure (see above) will be half-sectioned ensuring that all relationships are investigated. Where deemed necessary, by artefact content, a number may demand full excavation.
  - For other types of feature such as hollows, quarry pits etc., an attempt will be made to ascertain any and all relationships with/to other features. Further investigation will be a matter of on-site judgement, but will seek to establish as a minimum the extent, date and function of each feature.
  - Single context recording will be undertaken automatically within the hand excavation area.
- 4.9 The sampling of smelting and/or metalworking features/deposits will be by reference to the Historic England publication *Archaeometallurgy: Guidelines for Best Practice* (HE 2015). If required, specific advice on sampling strategy will be sought from Sarah Paynter, Materials Scientist, Historic England.
- 4.10 Should any human burials or remains be encountered the Archaeological Advisor and the Coroner's Office will immediately be informed and excavation will cease until the relevant Ministry of Justice licence has been obtained.
- 4.11 The provisions of the Treasure Act of 1996 (amended 2003) will be observed. Should finds of precious metals such as gold and silver or other finds as defined under the Act be made, they will be reported to the local Coroner and then deposited with the Coroner's local Archaeological Advisor. Should the removal of such objects be unable to be made during the same working day, suitable and appropriate security arrangement will be made to deposit them with the local Coroner's Office.
- 4.12 The site work will be directed by the former North Somerset County Archaeologist, who will be in attendance at all times during site work.
- 4.13 The North Somerset Archaeological Advisor and Historic England Advisor will be informed at the earliest opportunity of any archaeological features or deposits worthy of preservation. They will be free to visit the site at any time during the work in order to view the fieldwork whilst it is in progress.
- 4.14 A member of the team will be available at all times to engage with the public and explain proceedings and findings, and a basic daily information information poster will be displayed where the public can see it whether the site is active or not.

## **5 RECORDING METHODOLOGY**

- 5.1 All excavation work will be carried out in line with the recommended standards and in line with relevant CIfA guidance documents (CIfA 2014).
- 5.2 All exposed features will be recorded according to current professional standards using the standard context record sheets used by YCCCART employing a single context recording system.
- 5.3 All structural and other relationships will be recorded and a structural matrix created.
- 5.4 A full photographic record will be made of all significant archaeological features comprising digital photography. All digital records will be copied to permanent media at the end of each working day. Photographs will include a board that will detail: the site code, date, context number, section number, a scale and a north arrow. All photographs will be fully indexed and cross-referenced on YCCCART context sheets and photographic registers.
- 5.5 Detailed elevation and/or section drawings will be hand-drawn at 1:10 on plastic draughting film (permatrace).
- 5.6 A detailed plan of all archaeological features and the site limits will be prepared using a combination of OS data and Global Positioning System (GPS) surveying.
- 5.7 Where necessary, for example with very detailed structural features, then features, or parts of features will also be hand planned at a scale of 1:20 on permatrace using a planning frame. Any hand planned elements will be located on the site grid and then digitised to be included onto the overall plan.
- 5.8 If previously unknown buried features connected to the cross are revealed in the excavation, further recording may be undertaken by Nivcomp hydrostatic level, to provide digital terrain models of such features.
- 5.7 If deposits suitable for environmental sampling are encountered (such as dated excavated contexts of buried soils, well-sealed slowly silting features, sealed hearths, sealed features containing evident carbonised remains, peats, water-logged or cess deposits), bulk soil samples (40 litres or 100% of smaller features) will be taken for environmental analysis.
- 5.8 The exact level and detail of recording will meet the standards defined above, but will remain flexible and will be reviewed regularly by the Archaeological director on site.

## **6 POST-EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY AND REPORTING**

- 6.1 For the duration of the fieldwork programme a brief daily progress report will be prepared and e-mailed to the North Somerset Archaeological Officer (Daniel Smith), the owner (Congresbury Parish Council) and Historic England representative if so requested. A copy will also be displayed at site.
- 6.2 All finds will be cleaned, labelled, sorted and analysed in accordance with the practices and standards outlined in the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation's Conservation Guidelines No.2: Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990). Finds will be bagged in polythene bags according to type and context.
- 6.3 Suitable arrangements will be made for the conservation of artefacts where appropriate in consultation and with the agreement of the recipient museum. All finds in an unstable condition will be stabilised using passive conservation techniques where appropriate before being deposited with the local museum.
- 6.4 The majority of finds will be identified in-house. External specialists will be consulted if and when required. All material will be examined with particular attention to datable artefacts, such as lithics, pottery, building material, coins and other metalwork.
- 6.5 In the event of any human remains being encountered, excavations will pause until Ministry of Justice Guidelines can be complied with.
- 6.6 Upon completion of the fieldwork, the site archive will be assembled in accordance with the guidelines set out in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015). The site archive will contain all the data collected during the excavation including records, finds and environmental samples. It will be quantified, ordered, indexed and internally consistent.
- 6.7 A post-excavation report including plans, digital photographs and drawings for the excavations will be prepared within six weeks of completion of the site work, subject to the production of any necessary specialist reports. It will include a record of all materials recovered and all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. It will be quantified, ordered, indexed and internally consistent. It will also contain a site summary and artefactual and environmental data.
- 6.8 The report will be in line with guidelines set out in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015).
- 6.9 An Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) form will be completed at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> following the completion of the report and included as an appendix.
- 6.10 A draft copy of the report will be sent to the North Somerset Council Archaeological Advisor and Historic England Archaeological Advisor in the first instance for their comments and approval. Once the report has been accepted further copies and one

electronic copy in PDF format will be sent to Historic England, North Somerset Council and the client as appropriate.

- 6.11 A copy of the report will be supplied to the North Somerset HER on the understanding that it will become a public document after an appropriate period of time not exceeding six months.
- 6.12 Agreement shall be reached with the client and the Archaeological Advisor regarding the format and destination of any subsequent publication(s) arising from the investigations. It is proposed that a copy of the full report be made available on the YCCCART web site ([ycccart.co.uk](http://ycccart.co.uk)) within two months of completion of fieldwork.
- 6.13 Upon completion of the final report for publication, the archive will be prepared for deposition in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (Museums and Galleries Commission 1994).
- 6.14 Permission will be sought for the deposition of the site archive and finds at the appropriate museum. An accession number will be obtained as necessary.



## **7 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 7.1 A Risk Assessment has been produced and agreed with the client prior to the commencement of the work. All relevant main contractor health and safety regulations will be adhered to.

## **8 INSURANCE**

8.1 YCCART is insured against claims for:

public and products liability to the value of £2,000,000 any one event for all claims in the aggregate during any one period of insurance;

employers' liability to the value of £10,000,000 any one event inclusive of costs;

A copy of the relevant Certificate of Employers Liability Insurance will be available on site.

## **9 MONITORING**

- 9.1 Provision will be made at all stages of the project for North Somerset Council's Archaeological Advisor to monitor progress and standards.
- 9.2 Adequate provision will be made for the advisor to make site monitoring visits at any reasonable times.

## 10 REFERENCES

This list of references is by no means inclusive, but most sources of information for stone crosses are non-academic and should be viewed with some care.

Broomhead, R. 2007	Wraxall village cross; archaeological observations on behalf of Wraxall and Failand Parish Council <i>Unpublished report in North Somerset Historic Environment Record</i>
CIfA, 2014b	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation (revised)</i> . Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
Crossing, W. 1902	<i>The Ancient Stone Crosses of Dartmoor</i> Commin, Exeter
Harrison, W. 2001	<i>Dartmoor Stone Crosses</i> Devon Books, Tiverton
Historic England, 2015	Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)
Langdon, A. 1992	<i>Stone Crosses in North Cornwall</i> Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, Truro
Langdon, A. 1996	<i>Stone Crosses in East Cornwall</i> Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, Truro
Langdon, A. 1997	<i>Stone Crosses in West Penwith</i> Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, Truro
Langdon, A. 1999	<i>Stone Crosses in West Cornwall</i> Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, Truro
Langdon, A. 2002	<i>Stone Crosses in mid Cornwall</i> Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, Truro
Pooley, C. 1868	<i>Notes on the Old Crosses of Gloucestershire</i> Longmans Green, London
Pooley, C. 1877	<i>An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Old Stone Crosses of Somerset</i> Longmans, Green, London
Pope, A. 1906	<i>The Old Stone Crosses of Dorset</i> Chiswick, London
Rowe, L. 1973	<i>Granite Crosses of West Cornwall</i> Bradford Barton, Truro
Russett, V. unpublished web site	<i>The Old Stone Crosses of Somerset</i>
Starkey, F. 1983	<i>Dartmoor Crosses and some ancient tracks</i> Starkey, Devon
Thomas, H. J. 1996	Excavations in Barry churchyard <i>Morgannwg</i> 40 (82-85)
Watkins, A. 1930	<i>The Old Standing Crosses of Herefordshire</i>



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**13.2 Appendix 2**

**YCCART 2010/Y25  
North Somerset HER 2010-113**

**The Old Stone Crosses of Congresbury: historical and photographic study**

**YATTON, CONGRESBURY, CLAVERHAM AND CLEEVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH  
TEAM (YCCART)**

*General Editor: Vince Russett*



*Churchyard cross and Refectory, Congresbury 1827 (Pigott collection)*



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**Abstract**

*Congresbury village and churchyard crosses have been portrayed on many occasions by antiquarians, especially the former, being far more obvious to the passing visitor than the cross tucked away in the churchyard. It is unusual for a parish to have remains of both village and churchyard crosses surviving, especially now that work by Broomhead has cast doubt on the date of the supposed village cross at Wraxall.*

**Acknowledgements**

YCCCART are most grateful to Congresbury Parish Council and St Andrew's parish church, Congresbury for access to the churchyard cross – the village cross is in the public highway.

**Introduction**

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) is one of a number of Community Archaeology teams across North Somerset, originally supported by the North Somerset Council Development Management Team.

The objective of these teams is to carry out archaeological fieldwork, for the purpose of recording, and better understanding and management, of the heritage of northern Somerset.

The fieldwork for this report has been carried out with repeated visits by the author since 1974.

## Site locations



*Fig 1: Locations of Congresbury churchyard (to west) and village (east) crosses*

Congresbury churchyard cross lies in the churchyard of St Andrew's parish church, 25m SE of the corner of the south aisle chapel of the church, at ST43606374. The village cross stands at the junction of Broad Street and High Street, at ST43736381. Both are in the village of Congresbury in North Somerset, some 15km SW of the city of Bristol.

## Land use and Geology

The churchyard cross lies on an island of the Mercia Mudstones, as seen when new graves are cut in the modern extension to the churchyard; the village cross on the alluvial clays of the Northmarsh, which here overlay the Mudstones.

The former is in the current churchyard of Congresbury, although the area around the cross itself has not been in active use for burials for some decades. The latter is in the public highway, next to a busy main road.

## Historical and archaeological context

Medieval stone crosses were a fashionable subject of antiquarian enquiry from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Pooley was studying those of Gloucestershire (Pooley 1868) and Somerset (Pooley 1877). Some of the latest work on a whole county was that of Watkins on the crosses of Herefordshire (Watkins 1930). Sequences of reports on other counties have been published, but few have recently been examined using modern archaeological techniques.

Congresbury churchyard cross has featured on several occasions in county-wide recordings, such as those in the Braikenridge collection in the archives of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, and has featured in a number of post cards and other illustrative material (e. g. Tozer 1989).

A similar interest in recording has been experienced by Congresbury village cross, although being in the centre of the village and (before 1928 and the rebuilding and realignment of Congresbury bridge) on the main Weston-super-Mare to Bristol road, it has attracted more non-antiquarian attention than that in the churchyard.

The lack of recent academic study of these structures means that most of the ideas surrounding their construction and use (such as the strange persistence of belief in churchyard crosses being earlier than the church which they serve, which they almost never are) are 19<sup>th</sup> century in origin, and reflect the academic standards and ideas of that period.

The 'Old Stone Crosses of Somerset' was written and published in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (officially in 1877, although his research seems to have been carried out during the previous decade) by Dr Charles Pooley.

Pooley was a doctor at the Weston Sanatorium (now the 'Royal Sands' on Weston-super-Mare sea front) and lived in Raglan Crescent in Weston. He spent much of the 1860s and '70s travelling the lanes and byways of Somerset seeking out these fascinating monuments in churchyards, by waysides, over springs: he chatted with the local vicars and rectors, many of whom studied antiquities in their often remote parishes, where often they might be the only well-educated person in the place.

His documentary study seems, by today's standards, very slight, although to be fair his book was never intended as anything but 'notes', and he did achieve his plan, which was to make people far more aware of these structures, and to make certain they were better conserved, and in this, he largely succeeded.

Pooley retired to Cheltenham not long after the publication of his book, and a saddening letter now bound into the copy of the Old Stone Crosses in Nailsea library reveals that at the end of his life, he was completely blind.

The name 'stone cross' covers a multitude of sins (if you'll pardon the phrase): it can mean anything from a crude cross cut into a natural boulder (there is one on the border of the parishes of Culbone and Porlock, in far Exmoor) to a huge complex building erected for a market shelter (such as that in the market place at Cheddar).

The medieval form of cross, which broadly speaking consists of a set of steps, a socket and a shaft (all broadly, but not strictly, radially symmetric), supporting and displaying a small carved head with crucifixion and other scenes, is universal throughout the surviving Somerset crosses (with the exception of the special category of market crosses, which also incorporate a shelter over the steps - still radially symmetric, however).

The heads usually depicted a crucifixion scene on one side, and a second scene, often of the BVM holding the child Christ, on the other. The more ornate often also included figures on each side of the head as well, often figures of a knight and / or bishop.

Because of the religious symbolism of the carved heads, these were ruthlessly destroyed in the iconoclastic times of the Reformation and 17<sup>th</sup> century civil war. This was carried out so thoroughly that only four survive on their shafts in Somerset – Stringston and Spaxton near Bridgwater, Wedmore and Chewton Mendip. Pooley identified several heads or fragments of heads surviving elsewhere, and my research has raised this total to about 20.

Churchyard crosses are built for complex, inter-related reasons, but briefly, these seem to be

- 1 As a common memorial to all the dead of the churchyard
- 2 As a gathering point for the spreading of news and proclamations
- 3 As the last site of common celebration on the procession around the parish on Palm Sunday (Russett, in prep).

The crosses in churchyards are certainly always connected in the public mind with preaching: at Craswell and Llanveynoe in Herefordshire, Watkins (1930) recorded seats constructed outside the church, apparently for the use of congregations listening to preaching at crosses. Such seats exist at Spaxton and Glastonbury. This seems to have been unusual, and presumably other congregations stood (or maybe just sat on the grass). This was clearly the case with other crosses, such as that in Iron Acton churchyard in South Gloucestershire, where a small railed space is provided for the accommodation of the preacher.

One main function of the churchyard cross, however, seems to have been as the final station on the Palm Sunday procession before re-entering the church (see Watkins 1930, for a discussion of this). The result of such use is that many of the crosses have (and other presumably once had) affixes or drill holes or other features facing the church path, and which would have been used to hold decorations and possibly the pyx on Palm Sunday. Such a use is remembered in the name Yew Cross at Wookey, near Wells. This also implies that the cross was very likely to have originally been sited beside the path to the church door in use in the medieval period, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the south door. Fieldwork indicates that it is almost always sited (when in its original position) to the right of the path as the door is approached (as it is at Congresbury). This may imply that churchyard crosses not in this position have been moved at some time - this is certainly the case with Orchard Portman, near Taunton, where contemporary drawings during the 1840s document the move. In other cases, the path may have moved away from the cross, although this seems to be less likely to happen often.

During the period of the Reformation, a practice known as 'Creeping to the cross' was at first supported by King Henry VIII in 1539, then in 1546, Archbishop Cranmer drafted an edict (which the King never signed) for the banning of the practice along with other major religious festivals. After Lord Protector Somerset's edict for the destruction of all shrines and pictures of saints in July 1547, the blessing of foliage on Palm Sunday and 'Creeping to the Cross' were both banned in February 1548.

A few crosses, of course, have been moved into churchyards to protect them from destruction (such as Bishops Lydeard): others have made the opposite journey (Evercreech, for example), while some have dodged about the village (such as Meare), and in these cases, their original function cannot be readily assumed.

Village crosses ('market crosses') are rather more simple to understand, largely being central to trade and exchange (both of goods and of information and news) in the village.

Many crosses acting as market crosses have an interesting relationship to their market place, and to events there. Both sheltered and open crosses are frequently seen as sites for the sale of small produce, or where stalls can be erected. Frequently, and especially just beyond living memory, they were perceived as the appropriate place for market women to sit, (as opposed to the men who walked around the market trading livestock) and the frequency of the occurrence of the name 'Butter Cross' (supplemented by several occasions where name and records imply the existence of a cheese market) imply that the market function of crosses may have been seen as a domestic / female / enclosed role, as opposed to the agricultural / male / open role of the rest of the market. This is a large subject, and one that might be investigated further. In this context, it is interesting to see a letter of Sir Edward Hext of Low Ham to Ralph Rixdon, vicar of Kingsdon, in 1615, concerning Somerton market cross, and which includes the lines:

*'...but also will (at myne owne Chardge) build a fayre Crosse, that the people maye sytt drye to sell their butter, Cheese, Appells, oatemeale, Cabbage, rootes and other such thinges, as are solde at a Crosse...'* (Berry 1992: 110)

Time and again, the relationship of village crosses, High Crosses and crosses in suburbs of towns like Wells to markets is unmistakable (examples can be found in Wells, Frome, or Taunton). Presumably, the erection of a market cross would be part of the equipping of a market place, as would the erection of shambles, or allocation of places for stalls.

A class of market crosses with shelters around them may be developed from the simpler medieval forms: at Bridgwater, a wooden shelter used to convert a simple form into a market cross was ordered to be dismantled in 1724; Cheddar has a minutely narrow stone shelter that is very clearly an afterthought, and possibly, even in its origins, constrained by the narrowness of the roads that completely surround it. Later crosses, however (Shepton Mallet, for example) have an integral plan, and by the time of Somerton (attributed by Pooley to 1673, but probably early seventeenth century – see above), the shelter has become the more important element. At least in Somerset, none of the large market houses have been confused with crosses (unlike, for example, Ross on Wye), although there has been confusion over the former market house and market cross at Wells, and the naming of Dunster Yarn Market as a cross is perhaps just as unlikely.

The former existence of a class of secular shelter-market crosses, at (for example) Milverton, Nether Stowey and the surviving Somerton, which appear never to have borne religious symbols is clear, however. While it is quite possible that these succeeded former smaller medieval structures, this cannot be taken for granted: only in the case of Somerton is there known documentary evidence for a cross in the market place before the building of the market cross, although it might be assumed that both Milverton and Nether Stowey were important enough market centres to have warranted such crosses themselves. Dunster Yarn Market may have been the successor to the Butter Cross outside Dunster, which was probably moved from the town centre to its current wayside site, although the later history of this cross is not yet clear.

Through the medieval period (certainly until after 1499, when Yatton cross was supposedly made), the construction of the traditional form of cross indicates a major role in the life of the community. At some time in the sixteenth century however (and in a very short period of time), a remarkable paradigm shift occurs: with the Reformation, removal of monasteries, and the establishment of Anglicanism, the crosses were perceived as symbols of religious decadence, and the carved heads especially so: sixteenth and seventeenth century iconoclasm became the new perception of the crosses: popish and superstitious idols, they were to be brought down (although the fact that many of the carved heads were carefully hidden either intact or with the fragments gathered together, by building into walls - presumably by individuals concerned for the preservation of the religious features on the stones - indicates a significant, if minority, resistance to this idea).

As far as it is possible to tell, for the next century or so, the crosses were left to fall apart, with

depredateions for stone (such as at a boundary cross in Merriott in 1573 – SRO DD/TMP box 6, Court Books) recorded incidentally.

Ironically, at the same time, large sums were being expended on market crosses. Shepton Mallet cross is vital to the understanding of this phenomenon. It was constructed around 1500 (as was Glastonbury market cross), and it was originally crowned with a religious carving, indicating the continuing perception of even large structures as didactic and multi-purpose. Glastonbury was different: at the top of this structure was the equivocal figure of 'Jack Stagg', an apparently naked male figure bearing a shield, hardly an orthodox Christian symbol.

The market crosses continued to be made, and it is difficult not to relate the differing attitudes to this construction and the destructive attitude to smaller crosses, with the transition from late monastic and feudal to capitalist and market economic structures in larger society. As the purpose of the market place cross became more economic and less religious, so the structure became less overtly like a medieval cross and more like a shelter, until the arrival of such structures as Dunster Yarn Market, Milverton and Nether Stowey, which bear virtually no resemblance, and yet bear a clear developmental relationship to what has gone before, hence the retention of the name 'market cross'.

As the eighteenth century wore on, an interest in the picturesque began to develop, and at the end of the century, drawings such as those of Glastonbury depict 'shattered crosses', picturesque in the extreme state to which 200 and more years of neglect had brought them. Some were better maintained: Cheddar market cross was repaired many times during the 17th century, and even protected from traffic: it is noticeable that by this time, the expenditure involved in setting out stalls on market day was carefully recorded in the churchwardens accounts, the cross no doubt being viewed as an asset, commodified into a market building (SRO D/P/Ched various).

The eighteenth century also contributed to the picturesque of the crosses by contributing sundials, square dials and balls, and various other finials to replace the missing carved heads, as indeed happened to the cross in the village at Congresbury. The structures were clearly regarded as decorative features of the village landscape, symbols not of the power of Christianity, but of the largesse of the Lord of the Manor. It is hard not to also see the change from a religious and basically cyclical view of the world, to a linear, rationalist one, in the large number of sun-dials that appeared on the heads of crosses (even in churchyards, and despite the fact that they were still well-known to be of former religious significance).

Further discussion of origins and meanings of crosses are in Russett (in prep)

## Congresbury churchyard cross

The churchyard cross at Congresbury is probably on its original site in the churchyard. When Pooley examined the cross in the 1870s, he described it thus:

*The churchyard cross is a fine specimen of fourteenth century work. Two stages of it only are preserved - the steps, which are three in number, octagonal, and with sunk facings and weather-drip mouldings and splays; and the socket, which is an equal-sided octagon, with deep drip and a set-off at base. It stands east of the south porch of the church.*

*The basement measures 4 ft. each face, by 1 ft. 7 in. in height; the second step, 2 ft. 9 in. each face, by 1 ft. 1 in. in height; and the third, 2 ft. each face, by 1 ft. in height. The socket is 2 ft. 5 in. in height, and 2 ft. 10 in. square at base. (Pooley 1877)*

CONGRESBURY  
(Churchyard cross)



*Fig 2: Congresbury churchyard cross (from Pooley 1877)*

This is somewhat damning with faint praise. The cross is of freestone (Jurassic limestone, probably from Doultong) throughout.

The cross has deteriorated since Pooley's day, despite being declared a Scheduled Monument (Avon 19). In 1974, apart from this, it looked exactly as Pooley had portrayed it. Although Rutter (1829) does not describe this cross, he does depict it with no less than five steps, although it is not certain how accurate his drawing is (Rutter 1829: 35). The earliest known depictions of this cross were in 1827, and are to be found in the Piggott collection in the library of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society (Fig 3 below; cover artwork)

A slightly later (and far more accurate) drawing of the 1840s (Braikenridge 1840x1850 – Fig 4 below) shows the cross in a dilapidated and overgrown state, with large gaps between the stones, but otherwise much as in Pooley, with the possible exception of detail of the top of the socket, where the earlier drawing appears to show an octagonal section above the string which now forms the top of the socket. The cross is certainly in the same position as today, and was missing its shaft as early as that date. There must presumably have been a restoration between 1840 and the 1870s.





*Fig 3: Churchyard cross and church, Congresbury (Piggott collection 1827)*

A photograph of 1899 (Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society 45 (1899) p30) shows the cross in good condition. None of the nineteenth century illustrations clearly show the splay at the foot of the first step.



*Fig 4: Churchyard cross in 1840 – 50 (Braikenridge collection)*

The top of the socket is unusual, in that it has a large square shallow recess in it, rather than a

traditional socket. How this fitted a shaft is not clear, although it may have been that the stone recorded in Braikenridge and now not in place was that carrying the shaft mortise.

The adjacent yew tree has grown over and around the cross since 1974, and there is some argument for trimming it back to avoid damage to the stone.

In 1974, there were vague stories to the effect that the cross was traditionally called 'Congar's candlestick' (in the same way that the yew tree in the churchyard was traditionally 'Congar's walking stick'), although I have subsequently been unable to confirm this, and it may have been a story manufactured in the '70s (a time of much antiquarian invention).

### **Photographic survey**

This was carried out in 1974, 1990 and 1994 by VR. Detailed photographic survey is retained in the Vince Russett and YCCCART archives.



*Fig 5: Churchyard cross in 1994 (Vince Russett 1994) (scale = 1.0m)*

There are no traces of iron fittings or drill holes in the steps or socket of the cross, but these may have been removed during uninformed 'restorations' since the medieval period.

The hollow top to the socket is (Fig 6 below), as far as I am aware, unique: all other sockets have either a shaft, the remains of one, or a deep mortise for a shaft, either round (rarely) or square (usually) in section. Quite how the Congresbury cross socket functioned is unclear. It is, of course, possible that the socket has been hollowed out for some purpose after the shaft was demolished: in many areas, there is folklore based around the sockets being filled with vinegar to disinfect coins during trade at a time of plague – this could even reflect alteration of the top of the socket because of knowledge of, or even belief in, such tales.





*Fig 6: The unusual hollow top to socket of churchyard cross (Vince Russett 1994)*

## Congresbury village cross

Pooley (1877) also recorded this well-known cross. Until comparatively recently, this cross was very much the centre of village life, with 20<sup>th</sup> century photographs showing it as the focus of the weekly market and the meeting place of the local hunt. Its role in the village today is largely symbolic, although it is noticeable that the symbol chosen to represent the village on the 21<sup>st</sup> century village signs 'Congresbury / St Congar's Village' is the image of a village cross.

The cross is first drawn in the 1820's when it was in the middle of the cross-roads where Broad Street and High Street met the Weston-Bristol road.



*Fig 7: The view over Congresbury's medieval bridge (removed 1928) to the village cross, standing at the cross-roads (Piggott collection)*

The site of the cross was also recorded in one of the earliest maps of the village, a copy of the de Wilstar 1736-9 manorial maps.

*Fig 8: Map of Congresbury village (late 18<sup>th</sup> century) showing site of the cross at the village centre. Note the stream crossing High Street by the cross and running along Broad Street*

At this time, the cross could be easily seen along any of the roads, and its centrality is evidenced by the fact that (for example) the 1796 perambulators of the parish met at the cross before setting off for the parish boundary

'..Friday morning 20<sup>th</sup> May 1796 at half past 9 o'clock set off from Congresbury Cross..' (BRO 33041 BMC/4/20 (a))



*Fig 9: Congresbury village cross in 1827 (Piggott collection)*

The Piggott collection also contains the earliest known detailed depiction of the cross (Fig 9 above). While the depiction of the 'star-plinth' (see below) is unsure, the basic details of the cross (including that it had just four steps) are clear. If there had been another two steps, as Pooley says, they would surely have been visible in this pre-metalled road times. The nature of the affix at the top of the shaft is not clear from the drawing, but it appears to bear two lines of text – 'CONGRESBURY / MARKET' perhaps?

The next depiction of the cross was in the 1840s, by Braikenridge (Fig 10 below). While the scale of the cross is rather exaggerated (the human figures are reduced to not much more than a metre tall – hobbits in Congresbury, any one?) - the business and usage of the cross as a place to sit and gossip is probably very apt. The female figure at the lower right seems to have a bag with her: is this a depiction of something being sold at the cross?



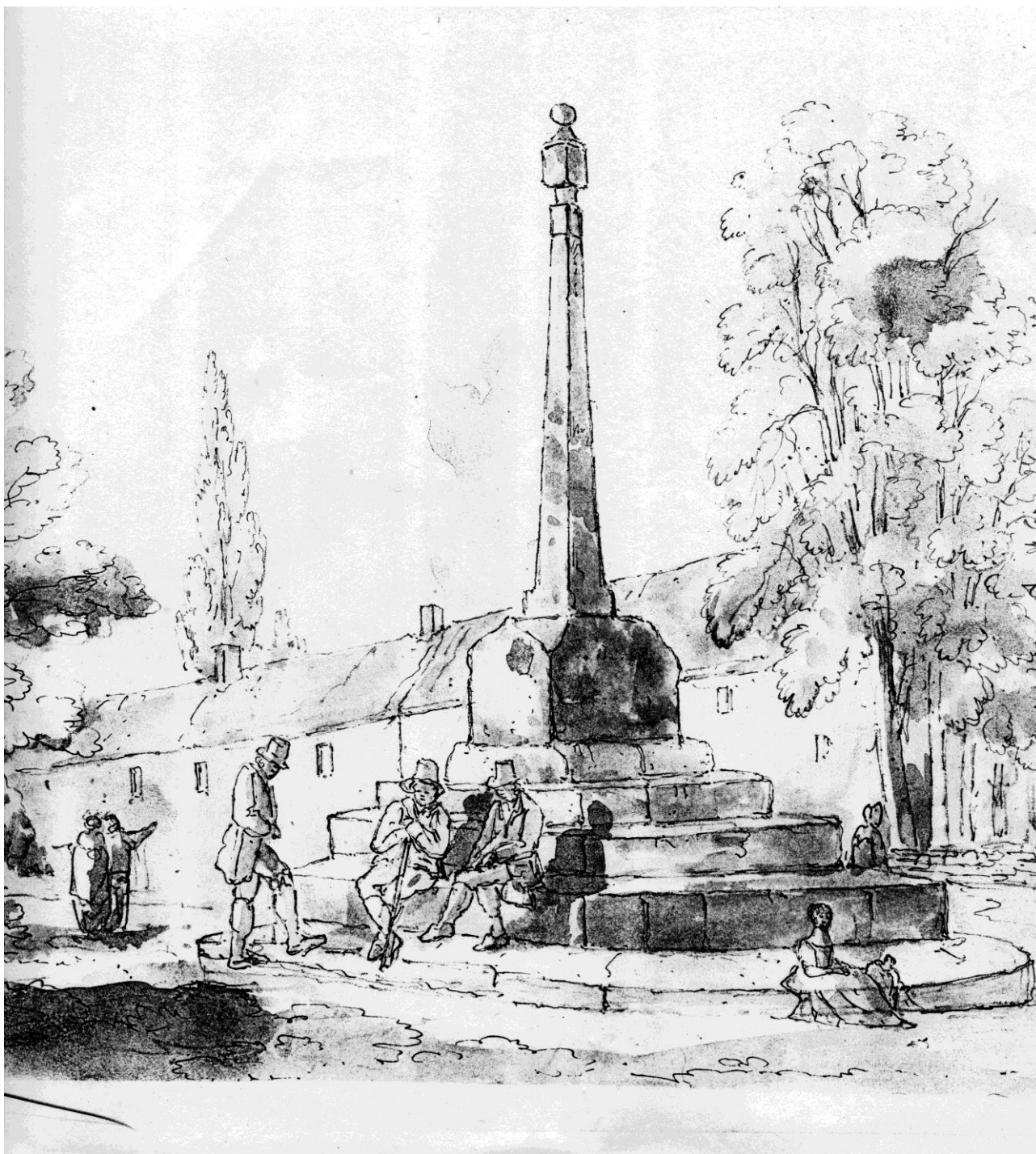


Fig 10: Congresbury village cross in c1840 (Braikenridge collection)

Pooley recorded the cross in the 1870s, and his text is dutifully breathless:

*The Village Cross is a structure of later date - fifteenth century, and is in a fair state of preservation. Its plan is octagonal. The Calvary consists of four steps -formerly six - two being buried by the raising of the roadway. The present basement is benched, and has a deep drip. The socket is of very large dimensions, proportioned to its original lofty elevation. Its square base is worked to an upper octagon by high-shouldered convex broaches at the angles.*

*It rests on a plinth of a character not unlike that of Yatton, being octagonal and splayed, with its angles obliquely chamfered to bold projecting nosings. The shaft is a tall tapering monolith, capped by a modern square block of stone with a ball on the top. It is mortised with lead into the socket.*

*Measurements:**Measurements:*

	<i>Steps</i>		<i>Socket</i>			<i>Shaft</i>						
	<i>Each face</i>		<i>Height</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Square</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Square</i>					
	<i>ft.</i>	<i>in.</i>	<i>ft.</i>	<i>in.</i>	<i>at base</i>	<i>ft.</i>	<i>at base</i>					
<i>Basement</i>	6	9	1	2	2	10	3	9	14	0	1	0
<i>2nd step</i>	5	9	1	4								
<i>3rd step</i>	4	6	1	3								
<i>4th step</i>	3	6	1	4								
<i>5th step</i>	2	2	1	0								

*The Cross is the property of the Charity Trustees of the Corporation of Bristol, by right of their being lords of the manor.*

*No repairs have been done to it of late years. (Pooley 1877: 124)*

Pooley is the first to mention the so-called 'star-plinth' upon which the sockets of a few, more decorated (and thus later?) of the crosses in North Somerset rest, notably those of Yatton, Dundry and Wraxall, although Wick St Lawrence village cross has something very similar. These may be an indicator of date, or even of coming from the same late medieval workshop, but more geological work needs to be done before this can be proven.

CONGRESBURY  
(Village cross)



*Fig 11: The village cross in 1870s (Pooley 1877: page)*

Pooley is the first illustrator to produce a recognisable background: the Ship and Castle Inn opposite looks realistic enough to be identifiable.

## Photographic survey

This was carried out by the author at various times between 1974 and the present. Copies of all photographs (including that of a subtle restoration and repointing in 2000) are kept in the Russett and YCCART archives.



*Fig 12: Village cross in 1994 (Vince Russett)*

Although road resurfacing has crept up the lowest step, the cross is in otherwise good condition, and sometimes over-eager schemes to 'restore' the cross have by and large been resisted. This cross, a Scheduled Monument (Avon 111), formerly belonged to the Charity Trustees of Bristol Corporation as Lords of the Manor, but was handed back to the parish in the early 1970s. It is well preserved, but the story that there are two further steps below the road surface seem not to be based on any hard evidence. Six steps would be very unusual for a stone cross in Somerset. The deep drip on the lowest step that Pooley mentions was almost entirely gone by 1973, although its last traces could just be seen: they are now covered by subsequent tarmac. Its former existence is a powerful argument for there only ever having been four steps: certainly, only four are shown on Braikenridges drawing of c1840-50 (Fig 10 above).

As Pooley noted, the socket rests on a Dundry / Wraxall type plinth, and although this is very worn, there do not appear to be any broken out-dowels in the points, unlike Dundry. The shaft is as portrayed by Pooley, with one small drill-hole about 0.8m above the stops. The dial cube does not appear to have any fixings for a sundial, and may be purely decorative.

Rutter (1829: 35) describes the cross as having '*...five tiers of steps, surmounted by a tall shaft*



*with arms...*; implying that possibly the cross was capped with a Latin finial, or that it had direction arms attached. This would imply that the dial and ball dates from between c1828 - c1845, when it was illustrated in Braikenridge's Collinson (Braikenridge 1840x1850) with the modern head arrangement. The current dial stone may be modern: it seems to have a smaller upper section, and this is not shown in the nineteenth century depictions of the cross, or Tozer's photograph of c1930.

At this period, and well into the twentieth century (the date on the nearby river bridge is 1928), the road from Bristol to Congresbury ran directly to the cross-roads where the cross stands, so it was very much in the middle of the village, rather than as now, where alterations have left it some 40m from the main road. There is an early photograph of this cross (albeit not very detailed) in Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society 45 :30, (1899), which seems to show the cross in very good condition at that time. A number of early photographs also appear in Tozer (1989), the earliest being from 1906, and one of 1908 confirming the good state of the cross seen in that of 1899.

The cross is a Grade II\* Listed Building, whose List description runs:

*'Village cross. fifteenth century with nineteenth century shaft finial. Limestone. Octagonal on plan, with four tiers of steps (formerly 6 - two are buried by the raising of the road level) up to square socket which has broached shoulders. Shaft square on plan also has broached shoulders and is 3 metres high. nineteenth century finial to shaft apex with block base and ball. The whole structure is 6 metres high, and forms an important visual element at the head of Broad Street opposite the Ship and Castle Inn (q.v.). The cross is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Avon no. 111.'* (DCMS List 1981).

A much damaged account roll of the Chapter Manor for 1388 records a number of grants of land lying within the lord's garden (SRO DD/CC 131910a/6 ). As this land comprised the demesne lands of the parsonage it is possible to locate it to the area bordering Broad Street on the east. Similar entries in fifteenth century compoti record various dwellings within this area. An early nineteenth century map of the Chapter land in this area shows what would appear to be regular house plots on its eastern side. The unusual width of this street, together with the late fourteenth century market cross at its northern end (described as "*le polecross*" in the accounts noted above), would suggest that this was a deliberately planned arrangement, and perhaps, the origins of the cross itself. (Broomhead, forthcoming)

## The Brinsea Stones

It is apposite to include here a brief note on the very high-quality pre-Conquest carved stones found in 1995 in the foundations of a building under conversion in Brinsea Road, Congresbury. These striking late saxon carvings (see below) were at the time interpreted as being parts of a Saxon cross.



*Fig 13: Two of the Brinsea Road stones (Mike Bedingfield)*

They are now believed to be portions from a shrine to St Congar, that formerly stood in the parish church of St Andrew. (Oakes and Costen 2003).

## References

Berry, S. 1992	Somerton Cross <i>Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries</i> 33
Broomhead, forthcoming	<i>The archaeology and landscapes of a Northmarsh parish: Congresbury (forthcoming)</i>
Oakes, M. and Costen, M. 2003	The Congresbury Carvings <i>Antiquaries Journal</i> 83, London
Pooley, C. 1877	<i>An historical and descriptive account of the Old Stone Crosses of Somerset</i> Longmans, Green and Co, London
Russett, V. in prep	<i>The Old Stone Crosses of Somerset</i> Russett, Weston-super-Mare
Rutter, J. 1829	<i>Delineations of the north-western division of the County of Somerset (etc)</i> Rutter, Shaftesbury
Watkins, A. 1930	<i>The Old Stone Crosses of Herefordshire</i> Watkins, Hereford

## Author

Vince Russett September 2010

## Addenda to 'Old Stone crosses of Congresbury'

p3, para3, line 2: ..in the public highway. *The structure of the cross, however, and any hypothetical buried steps, are an asset of Congresbury Parish Council, as successors in title to Queen Elizabeths Hospital, Bristol*

p12, para2, line 7: .. or even belief in, such tales. *Such stories are unlikely to be very early, since they may imply some knowledge of antiseptis inappropriate much before, say, 1800.*

p17 add

Since this paper was written, further evidence of the history of the cross has emerged (largely from the photographic archive of the Congresbury Local History Society, *per* Chris Short).

A short reference in the 1777 – 1780 accounts of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital includes £1.0.6d spent on repairs to the cross (this is a *précis* by the transcriber, Gill Beddingfield, and there may be more detail in the original). This was a century before Pooley published, giving some emphasis to his remark about the cross '*No repairs have been done to it of late years!*'

A further repair seems to have been carried out in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, which so far appears undocumented. A photograph of the cross in 1940, with painted stripes to assist cars in the blackout, and a photograph taken from the same direction by Russett in 1975, show that two curiously unworn cubic stones in the lowest visible step of the cross, opposite the Ship and Castle, had been placed in the interim. The stones are of a different, finer-grained lithology than the main body of the cross, and still bear clear working marks on their exposed end. Records of this may survive in the Parish Council archives.



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ne, while c 2cm more covered by road resurfacing, is recognisable by its 'ski-slope' profile, and the junction of the stones in the step above. The stone(s) to the right, which were more worn, are gone and replaced by the square blocks on which tooling marks survive. This repair seems at present to be undocumented, although it clearly wasn't recent in

1975.

Other photographs, from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, show the cross at the heart of Congresbury market, which occupied Broad Street, but clearly also spilled out onto the Bristol Road. On two occasions, stalls appear to have been erected on the north side of the cross opposite the Ship and Castle: if this was historic usage, it may account for the apparent increased wear on the northern side of the cross.

### 13.3 Appendix 3 OASIS form OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

## OASIS ID: ycccart2-261887

#### Project details

Project name	Congresbury village cross excavation
Short description of the project	An evaluation excavation at Congresbury village cross, designed to clarify details of the below-ground basement of the cross, and to recover evidence of any other related archaeology
Project dates	Start: 01-08-2016 End: 30-09-2016
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	CVC2016 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Site status (other)	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 11 - Thoroughfare
Monument type	VILLAGE CROSS Medieval
Significant Finds	CERAMIC Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Road scheme (new and widening)
Prompt	Conservation/ restoration
Position in the planning process	Pre-application
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	NORTH SOMERSET NORTH SOMERSET CONGRESBURY Congresbury village cross
Study area	4 Square metres
Site coordinates	ST 4373 6382 51.370149434205 -2.808446564779 51 22 12 N 002 48 30 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 6m Max: 6m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	YCCART

Project brief originator	Self (i.e. landowner, developer, etc.)
Project design originator	Vince Russett
Project director/manager	Vince Russett
Project supervisor	Vince Russett
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Somerset County Museum
Physical Archive ID	CVC2016
Physical Contents	"Glass","Animal Bones","Ceramics"
Physical Archive notes	Finds few in number
Digital Archive recipient	Somerset County Museum
Digital Archive ID	CVC2016
Digital Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Digital Archive notes	Copies to be held by Somerset County Museum, YCCCART archive and Vince Russett archive
Paper Archive recipient	Somerset County Museum
Paper Archive ID	CVC2016
Paper Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Stratigraphic","Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Correspondence","Drawing","Map","Matrices","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Unpublished Text"
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	A forthcoming report
Title	Congresbury Village Cross, Broad Street, Congresbury: Archaeological excavation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Russett, V.
Other bibliographic details	YCCCART Y6/2016
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	YCCCART
Place of issue or publication	Congresbury

Description Digital only through Historic England and YCCCART web site  
URL <http://www.ycccart.co.uk>

Project bibliography  
2

Publication type A forthcoming report

Title Congresbury Village Cross, Broad Street, Congresbury:  
Archaeological Excavation

Author(s)/Editor(s) Russett, V.

Entered by Vince Russett (vrussett@gmail.com)

Entered on 7 September 2016

**OASIS:**

Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

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Wednesday 9 May 2012

Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page



## **13.4 Statutory designation documents**

### **13.4.1 Scheduling document**

## **Congresbury village cross**

### **List Entry Summary**

This monument is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended as it appears to the Secretary of State to be of national importance.

This entry is a copy, the original is held by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Name: Congresbury village cross

List entry Number: 1015505

### **Location**

The monument may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: North Somerset

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish: Congresbury

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: Not applicable to this List entry.

Date first scheduled: 12-Feb-1925

Date of most recent amendment: 23-Dec-1996

### **Legacy System Information**

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: RSM

UID: 28824

### **Asset Groupings**

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

### **List entry Description**

#### **Summary of Monument**

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

## Reasons for Designation

A standing cross is a free standing upright structure, usually of stone, mostly erected during the medieval period (mid 10th to mid 16th centuries AD). Standing crosses served a variety of functions. In churchyards they served as stations for outdoor processions, particularly in the observance of Palm Sunday. Elsewhere, standing crosses were used within settlements as places for preaching, public proclamation and penance, as well as defining rights of sanctuary. Standing crosses were also employed to mark boundaries between parishes, property, or settlements. A few crosses were erected to commemorate battles. Some crosses were linked to particular saints, whose support and protection their presence would have helped to invoke. Crosses in market places may have helped to validate transactions. After the Reformation, some crosses continued in use as foci for municipal or borough ceremonies, for example as places for official proclamations and announcements; some were the scenes of games or recreational activity. Standing crosses were distributed throughout England and are thought to have numbered in excess of 12,000. However, their survival since the Reformation has been variable, being much affected by local conditions, attitudes and religious sentiment. In particular, many cross-heads were destroyed by iconoclasts during the 16th and 17th centuries. Less than 2,000 medieval standing crosses, with or without cross-heads, are now thought to exist. The oldest and most basic form of standing cross is the monolith, a stone shaft often set directly in the ground without a base. The most common form is the stepped cross, in which the shaft is set in a socket stone and raised upon a flight of steps; this type of cross remained current from the 11th to 12th centuries until after the Reformation. Where the cross-head survives it may take a variety of forms, from a lantern-like structure to a crucifix; the more elaborate examples date from the 15th century. Much less common than stepped crosses are spire-shaped crosses, often composed of three or four receding stages with elaborate architectural decoration and/or sculptured figures; the most famous of these include the Eleanor crosses, erected by Edward I at the stopping places of the funeral cortege of his wife, who died in 1290. Also uncommon are the preaching crosses which were built in public places from the 13th century, typically in the cemeteries of religious communities and cathedrals, market places and wide thoroughfares; they include a stepped base, buttresses supporting a vaulted canopy, in turn carrying either a shaft and head or a pinnacled spire. Standing crosses contribute significantly to our understanding of medieval customs, both secular and religious, and to our knowledge of medieval parishes and settlement patterns. All crosses which survive as standing monuments, especially those which stand in or near their original location, are considered worthy of protection.

Despite the head of the cross having been restored, Congresbury village cross survives well in what is likely to be its original location. Its position marks a crossroads which was likely to have been important in the medieval period. This is one of two crosses in the village, the other being in St Andrew's churchyard.

## History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

## Details

The monument includes a cross situated at a crossroads in Congresbury, the roads leading

to Bristol, Weston-super-Mare, Paul's Causeway and Churchill. The cross has a four step octagonal calvary, an octagonal plinth, square socket stone, shaft and head. The first step of the calvary is 5m in diameter and 0.2m high, with each side of the octagon measuring 2.1m. The step is benched and has a deep drip. The second, third and fourth steps are each 0.4m high, with octagonal sides measuring 1.75m, 1.4m and 1m respectively. Above the fourth step is an octagonal plinth which is 0.3m high, and each side of which is 0.7m long. This supports the square base of the socket stone which is 1.15m wide and 0.9m high with a central socket 0.4m square. Convex broaches at the angles of the socket stone produce an octagonal top. The c.2.5m high shaft has a square stopped base, and then tapers to a restored head comprising a square block of stone with a ball on top. The head of the cross was restored some time before the mid 19th century. The rest of the cross is considered to be 15th century and is Listed Grade II\*. The cross is reputed to have two further calvary steps which were buried when the level of the road was raised some time before the mid 19th century. The remains of the buried calvary steps are included in the scheduling. The tarmac and make up of the road around the cross is excluded from the scheduling where this falls within its protective margin, but the ground beneath is included.

MAP EXTRACT The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract. It includes a 1 metre boundary around the archaeological features, considered to be essential for the monument's support and preservation.

## **Selected Sources**

### **Books and journals**

Pooley, C, *Old Stone Crosses of Somerset*, (1877), 125

National Grid Reference: ST 43733 63816

### **13.4.2 Listing Document**

## **VILLAGE CROSS**

### **List Entry Summary**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: VILLAGE CROSS

List entry Number: 1158002

### **Location**

VILLAGE CROSS, BROAD STREET

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: North Somerset

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish: Congresbury

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II\*

Date first listed: 09-Feb-1961

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

## Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 33963

## Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

## List entry Description

### Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

### Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

### History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

### Details

ST 46 SW CONGRESBURY C.P. BROAD STREET

4/95 Village Cross 9.2.61 G.V. II\*

Village Cross. C15 with C19 shaft finial. Limestone. Octagonal on plan with 4 tiers of steps (formerly 6 - two are buried by the raising of the road level) up to square socket which has broached shoulders. Shaft square on plan also has broached shoulders and is 3 metres high. C19 finial to shaft apex with block base and ball. The whole structure is 6 metres high and forms an important visual element at the head of Broad Street opposite the Ship and Castle Inn (q.v.). The cross is a scheduled ancient monument, Avon No. 111. (Charles Pooley, *The Old Stone Crosses of Somerset*, 1877).

Listing NGR: ST4373363816

## **Selected Sources**

### **Books and journals**

Pooley, C, An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Old Stone Crosses of Somerset, (1877)

National Grid Reference: ST 43733 63816

## **Map**

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This copy shows the entry on 06-Feb-2016 at 01:58:05.

End of official listing

## VILLAGE CROSS

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Village Cross. C15 with C19 shaft finial. Limestone. Octagonal on plan with 4 tiers of steps (formerly 6 - two are buried by the raising of the road level) up to square socket which has broached shoulders. Shaft square on plan also has broached shoulders and is 3 metres high. C19 finial to shaft apex with block base and ball. The whole structure is 6 metres high and forms an important visual element at the head of Broad Street opposite the Ship and Castle Inn (q.v.). The cross is a scheduled ancient monument, Avon No. 111. (Charles Pooley, *The Old Stone Crosses of Somerset*, 1877).

Listing NGR: ST4373363816

## Selected Sources

### Books and journals

Pooley, C, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Old Stone Crosses of Somerset*, (1877)

National Grid Reference: ST 43733 63816

## Map

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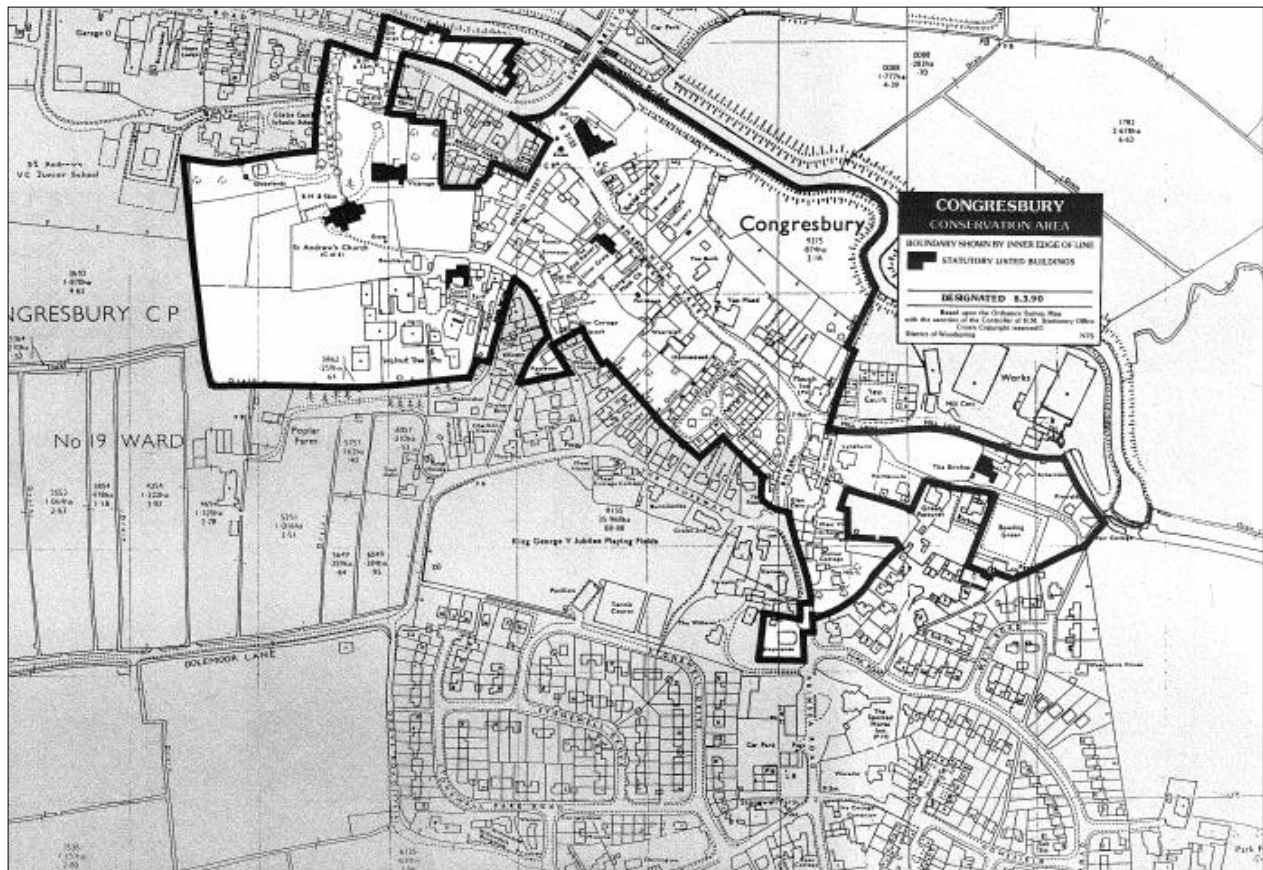
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End of official listing

### 13.4.2 Congresbury Conservation Area



North Somerset Council does not appear to have published any documentation regarding this Conservation Area and the justification for the area taken in. Neither does a management document seem to have been produced.



### 13.5 Finds by context

#### CERAMIC FABRICS

- CVC 1 German salt-glazed stonewares (Frechen type)
- CVC 2 Yellow combed and trailed slipwares (Bristol / Staffordshire)
- CVC 3 Devon gravel-tempered ware
- CVC 4 Bristol manganese slipped tankards
- CVC 5 East Somerset redwares ('Wanstrow')
- CVC 6 Miscellaneous Somerset redwares
- CVC 7 Miscellaneous late medieval wares (will probably sub-divide)
- CVC 8 Miscellaneous post-medieval roof tile
- CVC 9 Miscellaneous white transfer printed wares
- CVC 10 Miscellaneous white wares
- CVC 11 Clay pipe
- CVC 12 ?South Somerset redwares
- CVC 13 White salt-glazed stonewares
- CVC 14 'Industrial' stonewares
- CVC 15 Tin-glazed earthenwares
- CVC 16 English pre-industrial salt-glazed stonewares

## Context 1

### Ceramics

CVC 6	4 small sherds; 2 non-joining rims sherds of same vessel	
CVC 8	1 sherd	
CVC 9	4 tiny sherds	
CVC 10	10 small to tiny sherds, inc 3 rim sherds of same vessel	
CVC 11	16 plain stem frags (including one with cut marks); two bowl fragments, 1 very eroded base of bowl with spur	
CVC 15	1 tiny fragment	

### Metal

One Fe long shank, with offset at one end. ?Rowel spur 64mm

### Glass

1 clear glass bottle fragment (modern)

### Organic

5 small pieces of oyster shell

### Stone

Sharpened writing end of slate 'pencil' 19mm

### Comments

This layer is immediately below the blacktop in the area of the cross, and consequently contains modern contaminants. Nothing need be earlier than c1820.

## Context 3

### Ceramics

CVC Fabric no	No of sherds	Date
1	1 small	Late C 16 - 17
2	2 tiny (1 hollow vessel, 1 PMD)	1680-1750

3	2 small sherds (1 thick base internally glazed vessel (or tile); 1 frag of unglazed prob footrim of bowl)	C17 - C18
4	7 sherds, including one upper handle stub, with two other joining sherds; one base sherd with unglazed zone	C1700
5	9 sherds (none joining) 2 adjoining sherds of thin unslipped hollow vessel ?jar 1 slipped sherd with sgfaiito decoration (jar) 1 slipped fragment of top of strap handle with rim of jug 1 frag slipped strap handle 1 frag shoulder of internally glazed thin jar 3 small heavily-worn fragments	Not entirely clear, but prob mid-17 <sup>th</sup> to late 18 <sup>th</sup> century
6	2 joining sherds internally glazed hollow vessel in bright red fabric (2.5YR 5/8)	Post-medieval
7	1 sherd plain footrim of ?jug, sparse dark green glaze	?late medieval – look for parallels
8	2 sherds of tiles (different), sand-marked, 1 with edge	
9	5 sherds, one footrim	
10	11 sherds, 10 possibly from small cylindrical cup (inc 1 rim and 1 footrim); 1 other rim poss porcelain	
11	9 sherds. 1 base of bowl, spur marked J/I S , poss Sants of Bath working 1835-77, although the bowl looks older; one other fabric of point where bowl joins stem (not same	None need be earlier than 19 <sup>th</sup> century: there were six Bristol workers at least with the initials IS c 1800 (Russett 1987, 8)

	as above)	
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**Glass**

1 body sherd clear glass bottle, slight green tinge 19<sup>th</sup> century or later

**Metal**

1 nail shank, square section 46mm long

**Organic**

2 small fragments oyster shell (disintegrates in the local clays)

1 tooth

1 frag edge of bone

**Slag / clinker**

1 small frag light clinker

**Stone**

1 large rounded lump Doultling freestone ?where from

1 small lump Doultling FS

4 frags Carboniferous limestone

1 frag off-white mortar

1 small fragment quartzite

**Comments**

Finds here are in the pipe trench and thus basically unstratified. This context was much richer in finds than those around it, and the fill of the trench is possibly not derived from the immediate surroundings, but elsewhere. There seem to be no sherds fitting with finds from other contexts. The three joining sherds of CVC4 perhaps imply it was a place where larger sherds of pottery occurred, possibly a context physically closer to the pub.

**Context 4****Ceramics**

CVC 2	1 tiny sherd PMD	
CVC 3	2 small body sherds	
CVC 4	1 small body sherd	
CVC 5	1 body sherd slipped and sgraffito decorated jar	?C18
CVC 6	2 small and 3 tiny fragments, including a rim	

	(possibly pantile)	
CVC 8	5 sherds; 2 joining, 1 edge; 1 scrap	
CVC 9	22 small or tiny sherds, including 2 foot rims	C19
CVC 10	43 small sherds, including 2 small (?cup) rims and 5 footrims, all small	C19
CVC 11	19 undecorated stems, one at junction with bowl; 1 plain bowl fragment	C19
CVC 16	2 small body sherds	

### **Metal**

Fe nail, rectangular shank 46mm

### **Glass**

1 small rose-pink glass marble (10mm diam)  
1 neck sherd dark green bottle glass  
1 small sherd very pale green window glass  
1 scrap clear glass

### **Organic**

1 small fragment oyster shell

### **Stone**

10 small fragments CL  
2 small lumps early tarmac (probably intrusive from 27)  
1 small fragment off-white mortar

### **Comments**

This context is heavily cross-contaminated from 3 and 27 in cut 2 (the source of the two lumps of tarmac). Apart from a (residual) fragment of Wanstrow C18 jar, nothing here need be earlier than mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. As the basement of the cross was clearly not visible in 1827 (drawing) it may be that the context dates a little earlier than this, say 1820.

### **Context 6**

### **Ceramics**

CVC 3	1 tiny green-glazed body sherd	
CVC 5	10 sherds., all small. Two small footrim sherds, one rim . Two slipped sherds, one 'black' glazed.	PM, probably C17 - C18
CVC 6	3 small body sherds	
CVC 9	1 tiny sherd	
CVC 10	1 tiny sherd hollow vessel	
CVC 11	1 stem frag, narrow bore	
CVC 12	2 (non-joining) fragments of dripping tray, including complete profile	Not Wanstrow. PM, poss 18 <sup>th</sup> century
CVC 13	1 fragment of footrim of tankard	
CVC 14	1 bodysherd	
CVC 15	3 small body sherds, 2 with fragments of internal blue decoration	

### **Metal**

One fragment of iron heavy strap, heavily corroded. ?window fitting

### **Organic**

1 rib fragment, prob of sheep Several parallel cut marks visible on cancellous bone

### **Stone**

3 fragments of unidentified hard mortar (not like that of cross)

### **Comments**

This group feels better stratified than some. The tiny CVC 9 and CVC 14 wares could be intrusive: if such, the group cannot be any earlier than C17, and so post-dates the stones of the cross basement by centuries. Does it derive from an exposure of the cross basement in the C17 during road maintenance?

### **Context 10**

### **Ceramics**

CVC 2	1 tiny sherd	
CVC 3	Two small thick internally	

	glazed base sherds	
CVC 5	25 mostly small or tiny sherds. 4 slipped and decorated body sherds, 1 'black' glaze	C17-C18
CVC 6	2 small body sherds	
CVC 8	1 small sherd	
CVC 10	1 minute body sherd	
CVC 11	3 stem fragments (large bore), 1 small bowl fragment	

### **Metal**

2 small horseshoe nails Fe (29mm; 32mm)  
 1 heavy unident iron, tip curled 78mm long  
 1 tiny Fe fragment (?nail head)  
 1 tiny piece thin folded Cu alloy strip 22mm

### **Glass**

1 tiny piece clear glass

### **Organic**

7 fragments animal bone

### **Stone**

1 tiny fragment CL  
 1 unident

### **Comments**

Context now recognised as same as 25 (section 3). This appears to be an early road surface, clear in section but badly disturbed by 2 in excavation area. If CVC 10 fragment is intrusive, there is nothing to stop this context being late 17<sup>th</sup> century. It definitely abuts and is later than 11 (the cross basement).

### **Context 12**

### **Ceramics**

CVC 11	1 stem fragment, large and with cut marks	?C18
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### **Metal**

2 small Fe nails (30mm; 25mm)

### Organic

One section ?cow rib, with cut mark

1 shaft limb bone, prob sheep

1 incisor (?pig)

### Stone

One fragment Carboniferous limestone

1 fragment crystalline quartz (kept for director's shelf)

### Comments

Context probably associated with context 10 / 25 (early road surface).

### Context 20

### Ceramics

CVC 11	3 stem sherds, 2 narrow bore, one much wider	
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### Metal

One iron nail or spike, heavily corroded 111mm

### Comments

This layer was road make-up, cleared with heavy tools, which probably decreased finds recovery.

### Context 21

### Ceramics

CVC 2	1 body sherd PMD	
CVC 3	1 minute unglazed scrap	

### Stone

2 frags Carboniferous limestone

### Discussion

These finds are from a road make-up layer, and the stone is probably from that.

### Context 22



**Ceramics**

CVC 16	2 body sherds, 2 vessels	
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**Metal**

1 thin iron nail 33mm  
1 short horseshoe nail 25mm

**Organic**

1 animal tooth  
1 small mamal scapula, faces apparently polished

**Comments**

This layer was road make-up, cleared with heavy tools, which probably decreased finds recovery.

**Context 29****Ceramics**

CVC 5	1 sherd internally glazed bowl / plate	C17/18
CVC 7	1 sherd from bottom of belly of glazed jug	C15

**Metal**

1 heavily corroded Fe nail 49mm

**Organic**

1 large lump with saw marks on side  
2 small limb bone shafts  
1 rib fragment

**Comments**

From wet clayey layer at bottom of sequence. If CVC 5 sherd is not intrusive, cannot be earlier than c1700.

## Appendix 6 Photographs



Photograph 1 (4 August 2016): The relationship of basement [7] and [8], chocked by [9] below the lowest step of the cross. Note this lowest step is darkened by its burial. F3 flooded.





Photographs 2 and 3 (04 August 2016): SE view and E view of the lower part of the lowest step of the cross, usually buried.







Photograph 4 (5 August 2016): Relationship of Section 3 to cross, with context [10] lying against stones [7] and [8]. Context [25] (possible road surface) visible at base of section. Possible missing stones of [16] visible at lower right.



Photograph 5 (9 August 2016): Backfill of cut [2] in Section 5, looking N. Note the cut has passed immediately down the face of [7].



Photograph 6 (08 August 2016). View of Section 3, with evidence for cut 2 (F3) destruction: note the dark clayey [28]/[29] on left has no equivalent on right. The upward curve of [25] at the cross end of the section is clear. F1 (right of pipe) clearly had no more courses.